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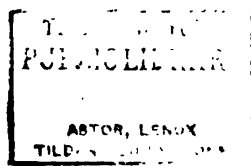


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CHARLE PHILIPPE DE FRANCE
Monsieur frère du Roi, Lieutenant Général du Royaume.

— Né le 9, Octobre, 1767. —

*Count of Artois, afterwards Charles X
 (The last of the Bourbon Kings)*

THE DECLINE OF
THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

1512

BY

HENRI MARTIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FOURTH PARIS EDITION

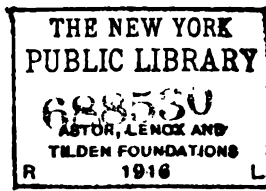
By MARY L. BOOTH.

VOL. II. PART II.

BOSTON:
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY.

1866.

ELS



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Louis was at this moment wholly under the influence of the comptroller-general, and Maurepas began seriously to fear that the King would escape him.

The parliament continuing to disobey, the King summoned it to Versailles, March 12. Philosophy and progress turned against the old abuses the forms which had been the usual weapons of despotism and fiscal oppression. The bed of justice was this time, to use the expression of Voltaire, a *bed of beneficence*.

The parliamentary orators, nevertheless, used a language which would scarcely have suited the worst days of Louis XV. After the keeper of the seals had feebly set forth the measures to which he lent his coöperation despite himself, the first president replied by a bombastic harangue, in which he depicted the gloomy sadness diffused everywhere, the people in consternation, the capital in alarm, and the nobility plunged in affliction. The tax substituted for the *corvée* was "ruinous if made as heavy as was necessary, and insufficient if this was not done."

The tax pretended to be ruinous to the privileged classes was light, apparently, to the unhappy *roturiers*! "This edict deals a new blow to the *natural* franchises of the nobility and the clergy," said the first president.

To derive privileges from natural right exceeds the bounds of absurdity!

The first president continued by declamations against the other edicts, even more perfidious than violent, and addressed to outside opinion; showing the subsistence of the Parisian people endangered by the abolition of the police of grain, all public order destroyed by the abolition of trade wardenships, and the redemption of the abolished posts overburdening the finances and leading to bankruptcy. The advocate-general Séguier surpassed the head of his company. He strove to establish, by a theory borrowed from the physiocrats themselves, that, the landed proprietor already paying all the taxes in the end, he would be ruined by a new burden; and complained that this tax confounded the nobility and the clergy with the rest of the people. The only reasonable objection made by him to the edict on the *corvée*,—a thing, moreover, inconsistent with his first argument,—was, that, as commerce profited by the roads as well as landed property, it should also be made to pay its part. He concluded by demanding that the roads should be made by the army. As to the trade-wardenships, he affirmed that these shackles, these fetters, these prohibitions, so

much decried, were precisely what constituted the glory, the safety, and the vast extent, of French commerce. He strove to terrify the King by the fantastic picture of the universal ruin which would follow the fall of the trade corporations. An unbridled *independence*, succeeding the regulated liberty (what liberty!) possessed by the nation, would inevitably destroy commerce, manufactures, and agriculture itself! He consented to admit, however, that the corporations were not without abuses, and that there was room for some reforms. He invoked in pathetic terms the glorious memories of St. Louis, Henri IV., Louis XIV., and Colbert, the principal authors, he said, of the regulation of manufactures. A single just idea was submerged in all this medley,—the necessity of insuring the integrity of manufacture.¹

The registration was proceeded with. While the parliament was depicting the people in consternation, the working-men, intoxicated with delight, were driving over the city in hackney-coaches filled to overflowing, thronging the taverns of the suburbs, with songs of mirth such as old Paris had never heard, and blessing liberty and its author with inexpressible joy. The peasants themselves, so slow to comprehend the good that it was sought to do them, but so persevering in pursuing the hope once discerned, began to be profoundly agitated. In the classes less directly favored by the measures of the government, all who were not blinded by interest or prejudice could not but be affected by the preambles of these edicts, breathing such generous confidence, such noble ardor for goodness and truth, and such active and communicative goodness. Public opinion became hourly enlightened. A very opportune publication placed the parliament in flagrant contradiction with the past. An extract from its registers was printed, showing that when Henri III. in 1581, with a purely fiscal aim, instituted trade wardenships and master-ships in a great number of towns in which they did not exist, the parliament resisted this innovation for two years; and that a bed of justice was required to establish the wardenship system, as one was now required to overthrow it. The prayers of the States-General of 1614, so favorable to the cause of the freedom of manufactures, might also have been quoted in behalf of the edicts.²

¹ See the official report of the session, ap. *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIII.

² *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. IX. p. 78. *Mercuré hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 318. Two days before the bed of justice (March 10), a royal declaration had restricted the burials which were customary in the churches and the cloisters, and prescribed the enlargement of the cemeteries, or their removal beyond the walls of the towns. The parliament itself had rendered an analogous decree with respect to Paris as early as 1765;

The prosperous state of commerce, and the abundance and ready circulation of capital, were excellent arguments in favor of Turgot. Money had fallen to four per cent, not, as under Louis XV., through an arbitrary measure of the government, but through the natural course of events. This rate was adopted as the basis of operations for a bank which Turgot authorized, without an exclusive privilege, under the name of the *Bank of Discount*, the establishment of which was regarded by the merchants with the liveliest satisfaction (March 24, 1776).

It was also on the basis of four per cent that Turgot negotiated a loan of sixty millions about the same time in Holland, to repay debts contracted at a higher interest; the only kind of loan that he believed permissible in a good administration.¹

A new benefaction diffused joy through whole provinces. An edict of April, 1776, did for wines what the edict of September, 1774, and the complementary edicts, had done for grain. The transportation and commerce of wine were declared free throughout the kingdom, on the payment of the *octrois* or other duties: all the duties were not abolished, but all the prohibitions were removed. The internal customs were thus abolished with respect to the two great productions of our soil, and with the royal customs, those municipal or seigniorial barriers with which the Middle Ages had studded France. The municipal aristocracies of Bordeaux and Marseilles, for instance, could no longer shut out from the sea the wines of Upper Guienne, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiny, for the exclusive interest of the territory of the two great cities.² Every thing was accessible to all. Turgot realized what his predecessor, whom it was pretended to oppose to him, the great Colbert, had desired, and had been unable to do.

The bed of justice, the excellent measures which had followed it, and the progress of disinterested public opinion, seemed to

and the Cardinal-Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, had caused the same reform to be adopted in his diocese in 1775, and urged the assembly of the clergy to propose it to the King. This was the only progressive measure which he could induce the assembly to adopt. — See *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 391.

¹ *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 341; Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. p. 212.

² The Marseilles police punished wagoners, who smuggled wine, by whipping. The very towns which complained most of the monopoly of Bordeaux and Marseilles exercised a similar one within their jurisdiction, and shut out *foreign* wines; that is, the wines of the neighboring cantons. The little town of Veines, in Dauphiny, on claiming from the council, in 1756, the confirmation of its privileges, ingenuously confessed that the prohibition of *foreign* wines was indispensable to it, since otherwise its own inhabitants would not consume the wines of its territory, "because of their bad quality." — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 536.

indicate the gradual strengthening of Turgot. Unhappily, the internal state of affairs did not correspond to the progress of events. Each success increased the number and bitterness of the enemies of reform; and it was very difficult for the feeble moral organization of Louis XVI. long to suffice for an expenditure of energy which needed to be renewed daily. The parliament, encouraged from the steps of the throne itself to continue the contest, had rendered a decree, March 30, in which it declared that "a few restless minds having weakened, by systematic opinions, the ancient and immutable principles which should serve as a rule for the conduct of nations," this had already resulted in divers places in the beginning of disturbances opposed to the authority of the King and the property-rights of the seigniors. The court therefore ordered all subjects of the King, feudatories, vassals, and persons under the jurisdiction of particular seigniors, to acquit, as in the past, the tributes and duties to which they were bound, whether towards the King or the seigniors; and forbade the incitement, either by speeches or indiscreet writings, to any innovation contrary to the said legitimate rights and usages.¹ The people of the rural districts, indeed, were beginning to be restless, and to resist, in Brittany and elsewhere, the employés of the farmers-general on the one hand, and the payment of the feudal tributes on the other. It was the first sparks of the conflagration of '89.

May 3, a new decree appeared against a book of the economic school, the *Perfect Monarch*,² in conformity with a frenzied speech by Séguier, who styled political economy a *murderous* doctrine; "the product of the effervescence which the love of indefinite liberty, with which all nations are tormented, has caused to spring up everywhere." The promoters of these *seditions* systems, "insane and furious preachers, audaciously promise themselves to destroy all governments, under the pretext of reforming them."

Turgot answered this insolent harangue by a letter of great warmth, addressed directly to Séguier. The parliament replied by complaining to the King of the insult offered to his advocate-general. The opposition of Turgot to the return of the parlia-

¹ *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 525.

² This book bore a name destined to be rendered illustrious in the Revolution, — that of Lanjuinais. It was the work of the elder brother of the celebrated Breton representative. Much more virulent than the writing against *feudal rights*, it spoke of the *necessity* of insurrection in certain extreme cases. The *perfect monarch* proposed as a model was the Emperor Joseph II. — See the *Mercur hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 706., Soulaivie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. III. p. 95.

ment was but too well justified, and Voltaire was excused for having applauded Maupeou. The situation was no longer tolerable. All plan of reform was impossible, unless this selfish and intractable oligarchy of the robe were crushed anew.

Louis XVI. was not equal to such a resolution. The parliament had powerful allies; and the league hostile to Turgot was hourly closing itself around the monarch beset by unceasing intrigues. All the royal household and the majority of the council were united against the reformatory minister. Maurepas had comprehended that his position, as the Mentor of the King, was no longer tenable by the side of Turgot, and that he must either give place to or overthrow him. He had, therefore, become reconciled to the Queen and the Princes. The Queen and the Count d'Artois, alike frivolous and inconsiderate, were hostile to the comptroller-general on account of his economy; the aunts of the King, on account of his philosophy. *Monsieur*, the only superior mind of the family, but a mind perverted by a depraved heart, affected the part of defender of the privileges; a part which he afterwards abandoned, when he perceived the force of the nascent revolution. He secretly issued a venomous pamphlet against Turgot, in which he took up and exaggerated the petty faults of the minister with signal malignity, for the purpose of turning him to ridicule; but, not content with deriding the somewhat disdainful stiffness and the lack of ease and elegance which were remarked in the manners and conversation of Turgot, and which were so fully redeemed by his noble face, his imposing mien, and the luminous flashes of thought which fell from his lips, he odiously distorted his character and principles.¹

Meanwhile, Maurepas employed all the art of an old courtier to infuse doubt and fear into the mind of Louis XVI., to undermine Turgot without attacking him openly, and to show the King, in the reforms of the minister, the subversion of the monarchy. Turgot disdained too much to defend himself: he believed too much in the power of reason and justice; he had too much faith in the King, and continued to treat the old man who had summoned him to power, and who was now laboring to

¹ This pamphlet, entitled *The Dream of M. de Maurepas, or the Manikins of the French Government*, was circulated in manuscript, April 1, 1776. Maurepas had not yet become reconciled with *Monsieur*; for he is ridiculed therein, like Turgot. — See Soultavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. III. p. 107; *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. IX., April 1, 1776.

drive him from it, with a conciliation which did not win him back, but facilitated his undertaking. He thought that he had only excited Maurepas' jealousy by freeing himself from the law made by the latter to his colleagues not to consult alone with the King, and renounced his private interviews with Louis XVI. It was depriving himself of the only means of resisting intrigue.

Louis wavered, a prey to cruel perplexity. Weary of contending for his minister, — as if it were not contending for himself; weary even, it must be confessed, of the too lofty flight imposed on his mediocrity by the genius of this minister, — he nevertheless still hesitated to break his so often repeated promises to sustain Turgot. He fluctuated between the fear of executing the projects of the innovators and that of abandoning them. A means was employed, it is affirmed, to decide him, which savored more of the convict-prison than of the court. Louis XVI., despite his native integrity, still preserved the deplorable habit of violating the secrecy of the mails, adopted by the two preceding reigns, and causing an account to be rendered him of letters possessing any political interest. The handwriting of Turgot was forged in a correspondence which contained sarcasms on the Queen, jests on Maurepas, and cutting speeches against the King, and which was transmitted to Louis XVI. The King fell into the snare.¹

Maurepas deemed the moment come to strike the final blow. Turgot had but a single friend in the council, — Malesherbes; for Saint-Germain stood aloof, without comprehending that his fate was bound up in that of the leader of reform. Maurepas resolved to deprive him of this support. Malesherbes had not shone in the ministry: of an extended and luminous mind, and a pure and serene soul, he was excellent in counsel, but powerless in execution. The goodness of Turgot was that which is so well expressed by the author of the Latin testament of Richelieu, *Severus in paucos fui, ut essem omnibus bonus*. The goodness of Malesherbes had not this necessary discretion: courageous against things, he was weak against persons. Too wise not to know himself, he had accepted the power contrary to his inclinations, and aspired only to quit it. Turgot retained him as it were by force: if he was of little value in his special ministry, his voice and the authority of his popular name were at least given in favor of all the propositions of the comptroller-general; and the affection

¹ This fact was revealed to Dupont de Nemours, the friend of Turgot, by M. de Angevillers, to whom Louis XVI. had confided it. — See *Œuv. de Turgot, Notice hist.*, t. I. p. cxi.

with which he had inspired the King was of great aid to Turgot. Maurepas first rid himself of the minister of the King's household. Upon some pretext, he entered into a calculated quarrel with Malesherbes, of such warmth, that the latter deemed it due to his dignity to proffer his resignation on the spot. Maurepas had counted on this. The King vainly entreated Malesherbes to withdraw his resignation. Their conversation ended with a touching speech of Louis XVI.: "*You are happier than I; you can abdicate!*"

The conduct of the King was quite different towards Turgot. The comptroller-general was advised to resign. He turned a deaf ear to the counsel. He wished to fall like a soldier at his post. May 12, he came to converse with the King on a new plan of an edict, preceded, as usual, by an exposition of his motives. "Another memorial!" said Louis, in ill-humor. He listened distastefully, and asked at the end, "Is that all?" — "Yes, sire." "So much the better," he replied; and quitted the room. Two hours after, Turgot received his letter of dismissal. "It was not such at least," says an historian far from friendly to the progressive party, "as might have been expected by a man, to whom, a few months before, the King had said, '*No one cares for the people but you and I!*'"¹

Turgot replied by a letter, such as assuredly no dismissed minister had ever before written: —

"I have done, sire, what I believed to be my duty, in setting forth to you with unreserved and unexampled frankness the difficulties of the position in which I have been placed, and what I have thought of yours. . . . My only desire is that you may always be able to believe that I have seen erroneously, and that I have shown you chimerical dangers. I hope that time may not justify me."²

¹ Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 192. It is said that his fall was accelerated by the resentment of a person high in position (probably the Queen), who had obtained from Louis XVI. an order on the treasury for five hundred thousand livres. Turgot induced the King to revoke the bond. Three days afterwards, he fell. — Bailli, *Hist. financière*, t. II. p. 214. This story appears tacitly confirmed by Turgot's farewell letter to the King.

² *Œuv. de Turgot*, t. I., *Notice hist.*, p. cxiv. He had written one day to the King that monarchs governed by courtiers had to choose only between the destinies of Charles I. or Charles IX. — Soulavie, *Mém. sur le règne de Louis XVI.*, t. II. p. 55. Louis XVI. afterwards became acquainted with that plan concerning the great municipal and administrative organization which Turgot had not had time to submit to him. We possess some annotations on this plan in his handwriting, dated February, 1788: they reflect little credit on his intellect. During the twelve years that elapsed after the fall of Turgot, he appeared continually to go backwards. On the eve of the Revolution, Turgot's reform seemed to him a rash, Utopian scheme; and

Versailles, the Palais, the aristocratic drawing-rooms, all the privileged classes, retaliated by an outburst of joy on the popular acclamations which had welcomed, around the barriers and in the hovels of Paris, the abolition of the wardenships and the *corvée*. Vanity, routine, and frivolity noisily congratulated themselves on their victory, while wisdom veiled its head. Men truly enlightened saw a whole world of peaceful hopes swallowed up with Turgot. "Ah!" exclaimed the aged Voltaire, whose sensibility became more demonstrative and more impassioned with age,—“ah! what fatal news do I hear! France would have been too happy! What will become of us? . . . I am thunder-struck! . . . We can never console ourselves for having seen the golden age dawn and perish. . . . I see nothing but death before me, since M. Turgot is no longer in power. . . . The thunderbolt has fallen on my brain and my heart.”¹

The patriarch of Ferney regained his self-possession only to express these same sentiments with more calmness in his noble *Epistle to a Man*. Voltaire was here the voice of posterity.

Would Turgot have really produced this *Golden Age*, so far as a golden age is possible in this world? Would he have opened to France an era of peaceful progress, instead of an era of conquest contended for amidst blood and ruin? Would not the errors mingled with the truths in the physiocratic system have rendered reformation abortive? The principal one of these errors, in an administrative point of view, was the taxation of real estate alone. But, before arriving at the complete application of the theory, the plan of Turgot admitted of a vast series of reforms, all excellent, and all incontestable. The condition of France would have been thoroughly enough improved to have permitted her to support without great disaster the trial of a system of taxation doubtless very defective, but not impossible in point of fact, as it would be at the present time, since the prodigious increase of personal property and manufactures. Would not this unsuccessful

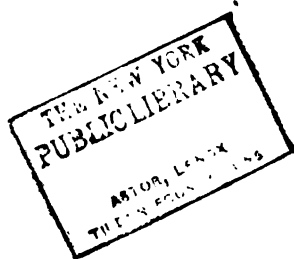
his sole anxiety was to maintain the *existing state*, the régime of the three orders, the social hierarchy founded on birth, etc. — See Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. III. p. 147, *et seq.* We have already given our opinion of this compiler, whose wretched character and versatile judgment are unworthy of any credit, but who had at his disposal a multitude of valuable documents, which the historian is obliged to borrow of him with precaution, and at his own risk and peril.

¹ *Correspond. de Voltaire*, 1776. A young preacher was interdicted the ministry by the Archbishop of Paris for having pronounced an impassioned eulogy on Turgot, in the pulpit, at Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, in the royal parish. This was the enthusiastic and eloquent Abbé Fauchet, afterwards so celebrated in the Revolution. — See Bachaumont, t. IX. p. 128.

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trial have simply led to the modification of the political economy of Quesnai and Turgot by the political economy of Adam Smith, and the admission of manufacturers and merchants to the rights as well as the burdens attributed at first only to the holders of the soil? Would not the *great municipality* have in time exceeded the aim of Turgot, and have gained the deliberative vote and the attributes of a national assembly? and would it not have paved the way for a remote democracy by a progressive transformation?

This would not have been impossible of realization, perhaps, had Louis XVI. possessed the energy of Louis XIV. and the opinions of Turgot. But, even in this case, would not the resistance of the first two orders, the magistracy and the privileged classes, have compelled the reformatory power to evoke the terrible force of the masses, and to pass over the intermediate régime which Turgot wished to inaugurate? Vain hypotheses! useless discussions! Providence had not in store for us those easy destinies dreamed of by philanthropy. The words of Rousseau were fulfilled. The reformation declared impossible by him had irrevocably failed. What the man *with the heart of L'Hôpital and the head of Bacon*,¹ what Turgot, had been unable to do, no one would do. The monarchy had refused to be saved. Reformation had failed: revolution was inevitable. The rôle of the philosophers, the sages, was ended: it was the turn of the men of destiny."²

¹ Expression of Malesherbes.

² J. Reynaud, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, art. TURGOT. There is always, in the life of peoples as in that of individuals, a time of choice and liberty; then fatality comes, which is only the offspring of our errors. It is we who make fatality; and, coming from man, it is not absolute.

CHAPTER VI.

LOUIS XVI. (CONTINUED.)

American War. OPENING OF THE ERA OF THE REVOLUTION. Clugni, Comptroller-General. Reaction. The Lottery. Reestablishment of the *Corvée*. Reestablishment of the Trade Wardenships and Masterships. Death of Clugni. The Reaction arrested. Necker, Director of Finance. Reestablishment of Order in the Accounts and of the Public Credit. Divers Reforms. Voltaire at Paris. Death of Voltaire and Rousseau. AMERICAN REVOLUTION. DECLARATION OF RIGHTS. Public Opinion aroused in Favor of the *Insurgents*. Curious Rôle of Beaumarchais. Indirect Aid furnished by the Government to the *Insurgents*. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES. La Fayette in America. The Government drawn on by Public Opinion. Treaty of Alliance between France and the United States. Rupture with England. Naval Battle of Ushant. India neglected. Loss of Pondicherry. D'Estaing's Expedition to America. Capture of Dominica. Loss of St. Lucia. Conquest of Senegal. Mediation of France between Austria and Prussia. Peace of Teschen. Alliance between Spain and France. Capture of St. Vincent and Grenada. Repulse at Savannah. Exploits of the French Navy. Invasion of Florida by the Spaniards. Success of Guichen against Rodney. Rochambeau's Expedition to the United States. Acts of Violence of the British Navy against Neutrals. *Armed Neutrality of the North*. England attacks Holland, and invades her Colonies. Conquest of Minorca. Capture of Tobago. Capitulation of Yorktown: a British Army surrenders to the Franco-Americans. Recapture of the Dutch Colonies in America. Taking of St. Christopher. Fall of Necker. Loss of a Naval Battle in the West Indies. Fruitless Attack on Gibraltar. Tardy Efforts in India. SUFFREN. Six Naval Battles in Two Years. Recapture of Trincomalee. Bussi sent back to India. Hyder-Ali and Tippe-Saib. Suffren saves Bussi, besieged in Goudelore by the English. He is arrested by Peace. New Treaties of Paris. England recognizes the Independence of the United States. France retains none of her Conquests except Tobago and Senegal, and recovers what she had lost during the War. Spain keeps Minorca and Florida.

1776-1783.

THE acts of Turgot's successor taught the people what they had lost. Maurepas, throwing off the modest guise in which he had clothed his omnipotence, arrogated to himself the title of Chief of the Council of Finance, as if clearly to mark the dependence in which he designed to hold the minister (May 14, 1776); then caused the intendant of Bordeaux, M. de Clugni, to be summoned to the comptroller-generalship. The accession of the new minister was signalized by the immediate fall of public credit. The Dutch were unwilling to effect the loan of sixty millions at four per

cent which they had promised Turgot; and the admirable general plan of a loan at four per cent for the conversion of the debt, which was costing the State five per cent, was necessarily abandoned. The stockholders of the bank of discount refused to disburse the ten millions which they had promised to loan the King; and the government was even obliged, in order to spare itself the disgrace of seeing that bank closed which it had so ostentatiously patronized, to restore two millions of these ten which it had already received on account. The comptroller-general could find no other resource for the remedy of the discredit than the establishment of a royal lottery, — an immoral institution, which the parliament had had the merit of opposing on different occasions, and which made the King the croupier of a great gaming-house. The royal lottery was created by a simple decree of the council, without registration (June 30, 1776). The language ascribed to the King was of nauseous baseness. After stating that the French had the bad habit of carrying their money to foreign lotteries, "His Majesty," continues the decree, "judges that, it being impossible to employ prohibition against inconveniences of this nature, the only remedy practicable is to procure for his subjects a new lottery, the different drawings of which, by offering them the chances which they insist on seeking, may be capable of satisfying and fixing their tastes."

The weak Louis XVI. subscribed these ignominious words with the same hand which had signed, the day before, the noble preambles of Turgot.

A few weeks after (August, 1776), a royal declaration reestablished the *ancient usage for the repairing of the roads*; that is, the CORVÉE! The framers of the declaration had the effrontery to accuse the preceding administration of having neglected these repairs during the two years which had just passed. Turgot had endured his fall with the calmness of a true philosopher; but he could not refrain from tears on seeing the yoke which he had broken placed again upon the necks of the unhappy peasants.

The freedom of manufactures was retracted simultaneously with the abolition of the *corvée*. The edict suppressing the trade masterships and wardenships was revoked (May, 1776). It was not dared, however, unconditionally to reestablish the ancient abuses: the six corporations of merchants, and the forty-four communities of the arts and trades, were reorganized at Paris; but the freedom of a certain number of vocations was suffered to subsist. The multiplication of trades *not incompatible with each*

other was authorized; women were no longer excluded from the condition of master-workmen; the initiation-fees were reduced; and the free merchants and artisans who had established themselves at Paris by favor of the edict of Turgot were permitted to continue to carry on their business in consideration of a trifling annual duty. The same system was extended to the provinces, which had not, like Paris, begun to enjoy the boon of liberty, and which had nothing to regret in Turgot's edict but a promise and a hope.¹

The persons as well as the works of the economists were attacked. It was not dared to exile Turgot; the King could never have been induced to do this: but the periodical collection of the Abbé Baudeau, the *Citizen's Ephemerides*, was suspended, and a company of revenue-farmers endeavored to secure the condemnation for calumny of this violent denouncer of financial malversations. Baudeau defended himself before the Châtelet, and, from the accused, became the accuser, amid the plaudits of the audience. He was acquitted, but was exiled to the country with another well-known economist, — Roubaud.²

The corollary of the reestablishment of the *corvée* and the wardenships was the renewal of the barbarous ordinances against smuggling. The declaration issued on this subject (September 2, 1776) made the King inveigh "against the evil-intentioned men, who," it says, "have deluded the people with the hope of the abolition of the farming of the salt-taxes, aids, and tobaccoes, and have even ventured upon insulting declamations against the farmers, their clerks and their collectors. . . . This license has borne its fruits. . . . Numerous troops of armed smugglers have made incursions into several parts of our kingdom; fraud has become prevalent in those of our provinces which are comprised within the limits of our farms of the salt-taxes, aids, and tobaccoes (the *pays d'élection*); and the employés and collectors of our farmers, exposed to rebellion, spoliation, and violence on the part of the defrauders, and sometimes even on that of the inhabitants of the towns and parishes, have often succumbed to the excesses committed against them, or have been compelled, to escape them, to abandon their functions."³

To this faithful picture of the popular irritation it must be added, that the peasants could only be induced to perform the

¹ *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. pp. 68-74.

² *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. IX. p. 191.

³ *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. p. 102.

road labor by force, and by compelling them literally to work under the lash. A formidable store of anger and malediction was accumulating for the future!

Maurepas began to take alarm. Unpopularity and financial embarrassment existed within, and grave difficulties and the increasing chances of a great war without; and it was not with such aid as Clugni's that he could face a situation which was becoming aggravated from day to day. Maurepas had resolved to sacrifice the comptroller-general; when the latter fell ill, and died (October 18, 1776). A vulgar reactor, he had shown himself devoid of application, talent, and morality. A contemporary has given the following definition of his ministry: "Four months of pillage, of which the King alone knew nothing."¹

Clugni's official successor was a somewhat obscure counsellor of State, Taboureau des Réaux; but the initiative and the real direction of the finances devolved, according to the intentions of Maurepas, upon a personage reputed to be second to Taboureau. Experience had just proved to the aged minister the impossibility of governing with clerks and traditional routine. He resigned himself to the absolute necessity of recalling buoyancy and progress to public affairs on a scale less grand and less decisive than under Turgot, but, nevertheless, sufficient to postpone the storm. One eminent man alone, among those whose special capacity fitted them for administration, offered Maurepas the double advantage of being unfriendly to his enemies the economists, and popular with the public,—the former defender of the Indian Company, the panegyrist of Colbert, the adversary, or rather the rival, of Turgot, the ex-banker Necker.² The financial and commercial bourgeoisie regarded this wealthy and able Genevese as their most distinguished representative; and the philosophers thronged the drawing-room where his wife wielded with less grace, but with loftier morality, the sceptre of the Du Deffants and Geoffrins,—that drawing-room where Madame de Staël was growing up. Necker had entered into correspondence with Maurepas by sending him a memorial, in which he pointed out the means of supplying the deficit, and the possibility of providing for the cost of a contingent war by inspiring the capitalists with confidence. Maurepas determined to try the Genevese. To raise to the comptroller-generalship a foreigner, a banker, and, above all, a Protestant, nevertheless appeared to him too daring. He eluded the

¹ *Mémoires de Marmontel*, t. II. p. 204. It should be *five* months.

² See *ante*, p. 307.

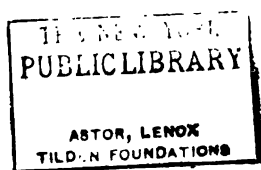
difficulty by causing the new title of director of the royal treasury to be created for Necker (October 21, 1776).

Necker began his career by refusing all emoluments of whatever kind, wishing to prove that nothing of the money-maker remained in him, and that fortune had been in his eyes a means, and not an end. This pecuniary disinterestedness cost him little: he was covetous only of renown. This celebrated personage has been too often and too well described to make it necessary to dwell long here upon his character. His well-known portrait, his face and mien, reveal at the first glance his virtues and his vices, — more haughtiness and austerity than strength; an active and penetrating intellect, with a wavering mind; a somewhat bombastic, but, nevertheless, true philanthropy; much pomp, vanity, and surface-life; the need of acting, the need of seeming, but also the need of being what he seemed; for his was a sincere and upright nature, after all, which loved virtue as it loved renown, but which was not philosophic enough to be happy through virtue without success.

A considerable rise in the public funds attested the friendly disposition of the capitalists; a disposition shared by the majority of the population. It was known that Necker desired the public good as well as Turgot, although by different means; and the appreciation of this difference was within the capacity of the few alone. There was no opposition except among the economists and the clergy. Some prelates complained to the King that important functions had been intrusted to a heretic. "If the clergy will pay the debts of the State," replied Louis, "they may interfere with the choice of the ministers."¹

Necker began by opportunely calling to mind his former vocation, and laboring to bring the public accounts in order. He instigated a regulation for the liquidation of the debts and the payment of the expenses of the King's household. The heads of the different branches, who received their orders directly from the King, were each requested to present to his Majesty a plan for economizing in his department. All the pensions assigned on different funds were concentrated on the treasury. It was announced that no more privileged interests in the farms, administration of the indirect taxes, or financial transactions, would be thenceforth conferred on any one. Various branches of the ad-

¹ *Mercur hist. et polit.* t. CLXXXI. p. 589. The *Mémoires Secrets*, said to be by Bachaumont (t. IX. p. 272), ascribes to Maurepas this answer, which contains a shade of irony in conformity with his character.





Grand d'après: Peinture par de St. Aubin

SEYDOWITZ
*Ministre de Louis XVI
 Né en 1734 mort en 1808*



ministration of the indirect taxes were united in a single department. These were not reforms, but the preface to them. Another measure was less laudable,—the creation of a loan, part of which was to be redeemed by means of a lottery, and the remainder converted into life-*rentes*. Turgot would not have permitted such an expedient. Life-*rentes* repose on a principle of selfishness too injurious to the social order! This creation of *rentes*, which was made, moreover, on advantageous conditions, owing to the confidence inspired by Necker, was warmly attacked in the parliament by the Counsellor d'Éprémesnil, who demanded the States-General: but this premature appeal awakened no response; the parliament was still under the influence of its pleasure at Turgot's dismissal, and bore no ill will to Necker. It contented itself with recommending economy to the King in general terms, and registered the measures without difficulty (January 7, 1777).¹

The suppression of the intendants of commerce, then of those of finance, and the substitution of simple commissions for these irremovable counsellors, manifested the intention to concentrate the entire authority in the cabinet of the minister,—a change very questionable in ordinary times, but perhaps indispensable in a period of radical reform. The minister who was destined in appearance to profit by the change, warmly opposed it, like all the innovations suggested by his subordinate. Maurepas had made his choice between the upright and mediocre defender of routine and the man of promises and seductive hopes. Ta-boureaux resigned his office. No nominal successor was appointed to the comptroller-generalship. The director of the treasury was simply named director-general of finance; that is, Necker had the authority without the title, but also without the right of admission to the council (June 29, 1777). Maurepas was not sorry to have the pretext of religion for retaining his protégé in this inferior position. The cabinet of Versailles none the less

¹ Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, continued by A. Renée, t. XXX. p. 109. There was a certain degree of irritation, meanwhile, in the parliament, caused by the movements of the Jesuits, who, it is said, having collected the scattered fragments of their order, had established a great commercial house at Lyons, and were propagating the affiliations of the *Sacred Heart*, and circulating a commentary on the Apocalypse, which predicted, that in the current year, 1777, the Jesuits would be recalled, and the sway of the Pope so firmly established, "that the State would be within the jurisdiction of the Church." This book was condemned to be burned, and a royal edict interdicted to the Jesuits educational functions and sacerdotal duties in towns, and obliged them to subscribe to the Four Articles in order to hold rural benefices or vicarships (May, 1777).—See Dros, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 265; and *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXV. p. 61.

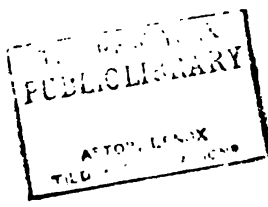
became, to the French and the European public, the *Necker ministry*.

The first measures of any interest that followed the retirement of Taboureaux were the prolongation for ten years of the municipal *octrois*, which the treasury shared with the towns (August 2); the application to the mails of a system which was a transition from the management by farmers-general to the direct administration by the government, and which indicated the ulterior views of Necker (August 17);¹ an excellent regulation concerning the direct taxes (November 4), prescribing that no quota-tax could be increased except at the time of a general and public verification of the revenue from the funds of the parish,—a verification made in the presence of the collectors, the syndic of the parish, and three other notable persons elected by the communes. The *twentieth on manufactures* was abolished in the rural districts, where it occasioned much annoyance to the tax-payers, and was of little profit to the State. The language of Turgot reappears in this document, which speaks of the *laws of justice and equality*, and gives the true reason of the legitimate increase of the taxes.² One of the objects of this regulation was the authentication of the returns of property-holders concerning the twentieths, an impost for which those subject to the villain-tax were taxed rigorously, and the privileged classes according to the revenues which they were pleased to return. This was the occasion of the first quarrel between Necker and the parliament, which affirmed in its remonstrances that the twentieths were a *gratuitous offering*. "Every property-holder," say the remonstrances, "has the right to grant subsidies, either personally or through his representatives. If he does not use this right through the nation as a body, it must necessarily revert to him indirectly. Confidence in personal returns is, therefore, the only indemnity for the right which the nation has not exercised, but cannot have lost, of granting and apportioning the twentieths itself."

The parliament would have been right had it meant by this that every tax-payer is entitled to be consulted concerning taxation; but applied to the privileged classes alone, and directed

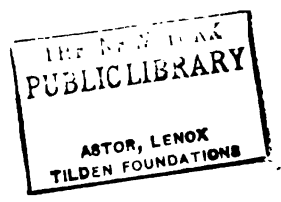
¹ The farmers agreed to pay one million eight hundred thousand francs in ready money, and to share the profits with the State. — *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 96.

² "To maintain an equilibrium in the finances, the revenues of the King should increase, at least to a certain degree, with the progress of the value of property; since this progress, the inevitable result of the annual increase of money, increases in the same proportion all the items of expenditure." — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 146.





HÔPITAL DE L'HOTEL-DIEU.



against the equalization of taxation, its doctrine was merely the sanction of social injustice under an anarchical form.¹ Justice had dictated the regulation concerning the taxes: humanity inspired Necker with the formation of a commission charged with inquiring into the means of ameliorating the hospitals of Paris, institutions of the charity of the Middle Ages, which had great need of improvement from the philanthropy of the eighteenth century. The aspect of the Hôtel-Dieu, the Salpêtrière, and the Bicêtre, was hideous. The sick, the aged, and the insane were huddled together in these vast receptacles of human misery. At the Hôtel-Dieu, a convalescent, a dying man, and a corpse, were sometimes seen stretched side by side in the same bed! At the Bicêtre, a single bed contained nine old men! The reformation of these odious abuses, the tradition of which still renders the hospitals an object of terror to the lower classes, was decreed, April 22, 1781, upon a report from Necker to the King. The active charity of Madame Necker had created an excellent model, on a small scale, in a hospital which still bears the name of her husband; but the reform prepared and decreed by Necker was not executed until his second ministry, upon a report drawn up in 1787 by the learned Bailli.²

The institution at Paris of a *mont-de-piété*, an Italian institution which had already been introduced into Flanders and Artois (December 9, 1777), and the foundation of annual prizes in behalf of new commercial and manufacturing establishments (December 28), are also worthy of mention.

All these, however, might be considered only as preludes on the part of a minister announced with so much éclat; but great events soon obliged him, if not to suspend the internal reforms, at least to subordinate them to another interest of greater importance. External policy was about, for some time, to resume the first part.

The world was trembling everywhere at the sound of arms.

¹ Dron, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 282. To this first year of Necker's administration belongs an edict which is interesting with respect to the history of social institutions,—the permission to the land-owners and farmers of Boulonnais to enclose their meadows despite the local law of the country which permitted the enclosure of only one-fifth of the estates; and granted to all the enjoyment of the meadows and the *riez* (uncultivated lands) from the 1st to the 15th of March. This was the disappearance of the last relic of the ancient community of the clan. — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 136.

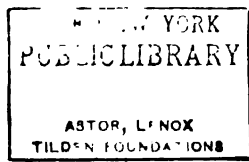
² *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 96. By a regulation for the extinction of mendicity, it is seen that the charitable workshops established at Paris under Turgot were continued. — *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Loud voices seemed calling from all sides on France to return to the arena. The haughty victor of 1763, England, saw her colonial empire crumbling in America, and shaken in India. Meanwhile, a young Emperor full of restless ambition, Joseph II., was looking about him for an opportunity to act and to aggrandize himself, no matter at whose expense: beyond him, the insatiable Russia, with one hand on the spoils of Poland, was stretching the other over Turkey, and already trampling under foot the treaty of Kanardschy, dictated by her the day before.

Suddenly, public curiosity was eagerly aroused by the news that the Emperor had arrived incognito at Paris (April 18, 1777). The Count von Falkenstein, the transparent pseudonyme of the illustrious traveller, staying at simple furnished lodgings, went everywhere, saw every thing, and comprehended every thing. In a few days, he knew Paris better than Louis XVI. would know it all his life. He went to the Invalides to see the creation of the Great King, which Louis XVI. had never visited; he was roused to indignation at the Hôtel-Dieu by the spectacle of inhumanity which his reprobation pointed out to the reformatory intentions of the ministry; and he made his way into the humble asylum where the Abbé de L'Épée, neglected by the government, and persecuted by the ecclesiastical authority, was devoting himself to the admirable task of the education of the deaf-mutes, whom he freed from their limbo to restore them to moral and social life. Joseph II. excited a sort of enthusiasm in Paris, and provoked comparisons far from flattering to the sluggish inertia of the King and the frivolity of the Queen. After a sojourn of six weeks in the capital, he rapidly made the tour of France, and quitted the kingdom by the way of Geneva, without going to see Voltaire, who was expecting him; either through regard for the piety of Maria Theresa, or through the fear of appearing to bow the imperial majesty before this other philosophic majesty. Of the great writers of the age, he visited only Buffon in his temple of the Jardin des Plantes.

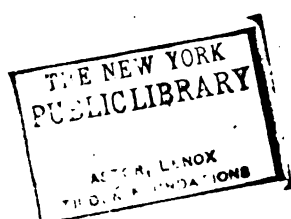
The Emperor had been less successful in the provinces than in Paris. He had too plainly revealed the jealousy inspired in him

¹ The archbishop had interdicted him the sacerdotal functions as a Jansenist. The government did not come to the aid of the Abbé de L'Épée until the following year, and then very indifferently. In November, 1778, a portion of the property of the convent of the Celestines, which had just been suppressed, was applied to the deaf-mute asylum. — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 459. The commission formed for the combination and suppression of monasteries was beginning to bear fruit.





L'ABBÉ DE L'ÉPÉE.
d'après le buste de M. Heudon.



by the power and the unity of France. He had, besides, another reason for ill humor, — he had been unable to obtain any political pledge from the King. Every one had thought rightly, that Joseph had come for the purpose of attempting to rivet the Franco-Austrian alliance, greatly relaxed during the last few years; but it was not clearly known what advantage he intended to derive from this alliance. The minister of foreign affairs, Vergennes, agreed with Maurepas in opposing the Austrian tendencies of Marie-Antoinette, had warned Louis XVI. of the projects against Turkey which were ascribed to the Emperor.¹ Precisely the contrary was at that moment the case. Joseph, dissatisfied with Catharine II., who had obliged him to stop his new encroachments on Poland, was inclined to a defensive alliance with France against Russia, in order to prevent the latter from extending her possessions farther at the expense of the Turks. His insinuations were evaded: the King was afraid of witnessing the renewal of the Seven-Years' War, and of pledging himself on the Continent, when there was a probability of a new collision with England. Another foreigner, greater than Joseph II. in history, had preceded him to Paris with a different purpose: this was Benjamin Franklin, who came to solicit the aid of France in behalf of the Anglo-Americans, in insurrection against England (December, 1776).

The cold reception given to the projects of Joseph II. was, nevertheless, a prodigious mistake. There would have been no war on the Continent; for the aged Frederick no longer desired it, and would not have supported the Russians, who would have been restrained without war. Joseph, rebuffed, made overtures to Catharine, and afterwards seconded, instead of opposing, the enterprises of the Czarina against the Ottoman empire.²

The excitement caused in France by the journey of Joseph II. was soon effaced by the passionate agitation awakened by the greatest event of the age, — the AMERICAN REVOLUTION. A great diversion from this preoccupation of the public occurred, however, in the beginning of 1778, — a diversion, moreover, which could not but redouble the emotion of the public mind, and which was caused by a new traveller. The latter, who agitated Paris far more than Joseph II. had done, also wore a crown,

¹ Flasse, t. VII. p. 138.

² Soultavie, *Mémoires du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 49. Soultavie quotes entire a very interesting memorial found in the papers of Louis XVI., — a criticism on the administration of M. de Vergennes, which he attributes to the Count de Grimoard.

but did not owe it to his ancestors. After twenty-eight years' absence, Voltaire arrived at Paris, February 10, 1778.

So long as Louis XV. had lived, Voltaire, by a species of tacit agreement between Versailles and Ferney, had abstained from reappearing on the banks of the Seine. Since that time, the fear of being an embarrassment to Turgot, and the dread of the reaction which seemed destined to follow the fall of the philosopher-minister, had restrained him by turns; but the accession of a Protestant minister speedily proved to him how irresistible that torrent of the age, the sluices of which he had opened, had become. He determined to go thither. No *official* prohibition interdicted to him the capital; and, once there, he well knew that no one would dare drive him away. The clergy, indeed, uselessly solicited his expulsion from the King, but were forced to esteem themselves happy that the prince of innovators was not presented to Louis XVI., as was desired by the Queen and the Count d'Artois, who suffered themselves to be swept away by the tide of fashion, who had not yet sided with the past, and who dreaded the innovators only for their economy. *Monsieur*, who affected reserve and gravity, did not declare himself in the same direction. The rigid and devout Louis XVI. refused to see *the enemy of religion and good morals*; but this was all. If he permitted the clergy to preach against Voltaire in his chapel, he suffered his superintendent of public buildings, by way of compensation, to order from the sculptor Pigalle the statue of the patriarch of Ferney, and the minister of his household¹ to forbid the journals to attack him. This prohibition was afterwards revoked on the clamor of the clergy; but what mattered it to that flood of public opinion which swept away every thing, — to that voice of the people which stifled all opposition by its resounding acclamations?

The city and the court (the time had passed when men said the court and the city), a whole generation, a whole people of great nobles, magistrates, men of letters, artists, and scholars, thronged the drawing-rooms of the mansion where Voltaire had accepted a sumptuous hospitality;² each begging a word or a smile from the great man enthroned there amidst the encyclopedists, like a monarch surrounded by his peers. "The glance of Louis XIV. had not produced more effect on a court by whom

¹ Amelot, the creature of Maurepas, and the successor of Malesherbes.

² The house of the Marquis de Villette, on the corner of the Rue de Beaune and the Quai Voltaire.

he was adored than was produced by the sparkling glance of Voltaire."¹ Without, an enthusiastic multitude indemnified itself for being unable to obtain admission to the sanctuary by waiting for the exit of the illustrious old man or his appearance at the windows, and escorting him everywhere in a triumphal procession. His lightest sayings circulated throughout Paris and France; his steps were counted; all his movements were commented upon; and it was told with emotion how he flung himself into the arms of Turgot, bursting into tears, and exclaiming, "Let me kiss the hand that has signed the salvation of the people!" The imposing scene was recounted which took place when Dr. Franklin,—that illustrious scholar, become one of the prime movers of a glorious revolution,—that man who

"Snatched the lightning from heaven, and the sceptre from tyrants,"²

came to entreat Voltaire to bless his grandson. "*God and Liberty!*" exclaimed the old man of Ferney: "that is the only benediction which suits the grandson of Franklin!" August words, which consecrated the lips that uttered them, like the brow which received them,— words which purified the last days of the patriarch of Ferney, and were, so to speak, the formula of baptism conferred by philosophic France on its adopted child,— on the new republican world just dawning beyond the seas!

This continual appearance in public, agitated by so many emotions; the fatigue caused by the rehearsals of a tragedy, the last offspring of his poetic vein, which he placed with a faltering hand on that French stage where his glory had commenced with *Œdipus* sixty years before,— exhausted the ardent old man:³ the blood gushed from his panting lungs, and in a few days he seemed at the last extremity.

It was a moment of anxiety and universal expectation. Men were not only troubled at Voltaire's death, but anxious to know how he would die. A new and singular event had thrown the clergy into consternation two years before. A prince of the blood, that Conti who had played a very confused and equivocal part for thirty years, had died, August 2, 1776, after refusing the sac-

¹ Lacretelle, *Hist. de France pendant le xviii. siècle*, t. V. p. 159.

² "Eripuit cælo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis."

This beautiful line, ascribed to Turgot, belongs, it is said, to the Latin poet Manilius.

³ The admirable interpreter of the creations of Voltaire and the masterpieces of the past age, Lekain, had just disappeared from this stage, after carrying the dramatic art to the highest point which it had yet attained in France.

raments of a belief which was no longer his own. The clergy hoped to far more than repair the impression caused by this *philosophic* death, could it induce the patriarch of *impiety* himself to die in the bosom of the Church. A priest succeeded in gaining access to Voltaire. The philosopher, in less serious circumstances, had shown but too much readiness to adapt himself to the rites of Catholicism, or rather to trifle with these rites. This time, again, wishing to avoid noise, and to die in peace, he yielded, confessed, and signed a profession of the Catholic faith, asking pardon of the Church for the scandal which he might have caused it (March 2, 1788).

The victory of the clergy was not of long duration. The prodigious vitality of Voltaire raised him for a moment from the gates of the tomb: he thought only of effacing the remembrance of what some around him styled an act of weakness, and others a profanation; and his last days were only a succession of triumphs. April 1, he repaired to the Academy, which had sent him deputation after deputation, and which went in a body to meet him; an honor which it did not even pay to crowned heads. The greater part of the ecclesiastical members protested by their absence. Voltaire acknowledged the welcome of the great literary body by a most admirable plan for the remodelling of the everlasting *Dictionary*, which he wished to inaugurate by undertaking the letter A.¹ The long-lived old man laid plans as if he were never to quit the world. From the Academy he went to the Comédie-Française. The details of this scene of delirium, of this apotheosis, which compensated for sixty years of battle, are within the memory of all. The burin has a hundred times reproduced the *Coronation of Voltaire*, that crowning of the king of philosophers, celebrated amid shouts of *Long live Mahomet! Long live the Henriade!* and also, it must be confessed, *Long live the Maid of Orleans!* On this evening, in which a whole century was condensed, Voltaire triumphed *entire* in good as in evil; on this evening, the old man could repeat to himself, in the intoxication of victory,

"I have done more in my time than Luther and Calvin."

It had not been Marie-Antoinette's fault that the crown of

¹ "This plan consisted in following the history of each word from the moment that it appeared in the language, in marking the different meanings which it had had at different epochs, . . . and in employing, to express the different shades, not sentences made by chance, but examples taken from the authors who were the best authorities."—Condorcet, *Vie de Voltaire*. This is the plan which the Academy is now beginning to execute.

France had not bowed before the crown of the poet-philosopher. The Queen, who had already gone to see and applaud the first representation of *Irene* in its author's absence, was on her way to the Comédie-Française, when an express order from the King obliged her to turn back. The House of Orleans, which was more and more clearly defining its part as the friend of progress, gave Voltaire, a few days after, a veritable ovation at the house of Madame de Montesson and at the Palais-Royal. The reception of Voltaire among the Free Masons was also an episode worthy of remembrance. Their secret was only his own, HUMANITY and TOLERANCE; and here the good was without alloy.

He had had his recompense: he could die. Over-excited, and preyed upon by this continual agitation, he sought sleep from factitious means, laudanum; and mistook the dose. This accident was beyond remedy. He fell into a lethargic stupor, from which he was never more aroused except at intervals. He refused in these intervals to repeat his profession of the Catholic faith. A last impulse of joy reanimated his heart for a moment when he learned of the success of his efforts for the rehabilitation of the memory of the unhappy Lally. He expired May 30, 1778, at eleven in the evening. He had lived eighty-four years, and had made the world resound with his name for sixty.

The public imperiously demanded funeral honors for the great man. The aged archbishop and the clergy were determined to refuse them. The feeble government of Louis XVI., uneasy and embarrassed, could find nothing better to do than to forbid the journals to speak of the illustrious dead, either for good or evil.

The Abbé Mignot, the nephew of Voltaire, extricated the government from the difficulty by carrying off the body of his uncle, and interring it in his abbey of Scellières in Champagne, before the diocesan bishop had time to oppose it. It was to this place, thirteen years after, that the Constituent Assembly was to send for the remains of Voltaire, in order solemnly to transfer them to the monument consecrated by it to our great men.¹

Scarcely had the star of Voltaire set on the horizon, when another great star of the eighteenth century vanished in turn.

By a singular contrast, which is not without example among the men most disposed to contemplative life, it was to the tumult-

¹ See, concerning the sojourn of Voltaire at Paris, and the incidents relative to the interference of the clergy, the *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XI. passim; *Correspond. de Grimm*, t. X., April-June. The kind of elegy, *He has fallen into the fatal abyss*, etc., is by Diderot.

tuous centre of the great city,¹ that *wilderness of men*, as it has been styled, that Rousseau had come in search of a solitude often disturbed by others, and most of all by himself. He had lived there for eight years, constantly becoming more detached from the things around him (his work on the *Government of Poland* was his last tribute to the interests of this world), and fluctuating between the moments of moral repose, in which a peaceful conscience made him taste that contemplative sentiment of existence which he called the *sweetness of living*,² and the increasing paroxysms of his gloomy hypochondria. Thence proceeded the double character of his last posthumous writings, — strange alternations of bitterness and resignation, of aberration and wisdom. We know of no reading more painful than his *Dialogues*, in which he struggled against the phantoms of his brain, and exhausted his strength in justifying himself against imaginary accusations. One day, he himself distributed in the street a pathetic appeal to Frenchmen; another day, he wished to lay the manuscript of the *Dialogues* on the high altar of Notre-Dame, as if to place his defence under the immediate protection of the God of truth. And with this conviction of an atrocious plot which had dishonored him, which had destroyed him in the mind of the existing generation, which had alienated even the little children from him, there was no bitterness, not a word of hatred against his persecutors: he asked vengeance neither of men nor of God. "He was never heard to speak ill of any one:" he rendered full justice to his enemies, both real and supposed; and approved, in the recesses of his humble retreat, the brilliant honors paid to Voltaire.³ By the side of innumerable proofs of the fixed idea which misled him, never was there in him more moral elevation, never such evangelical sweetness, never such profound, such pure, and such tender religious feeling, as in those *Reveries* which were, so to speak, his farewell to earth. His sublime intellect and his loving heart hovered, as it were, above the wreck of practical reason.

¹ Rue Plâtrière, now Rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau.

² "It is not by the accumulation of pleasures that one is happy, but by a permanent state which is not composed of distinct actions." — *Correspondance*, Letter of January 17, 1770.

³ See the Relations of Corancez and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. The latter relates a little incident of another kind, but very characteristic. One day, Rousseau, while walking, preferred suffering a burning thirst to picking up fruit from the ground without the permission of the owner. This incident, puerile in appearance, shows how rigorously he strove to make his conduct accord with his principles. — *Œuvres de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre*, t. XII.

With the sufferings of his mind, his infirmities increased : poverty became harder to the old man,¹ whose pride rejected material aid, as his suspicion usually put aside moral consolation. He at length consented to accept an asylum in the country to shelter his last days : he wished to die in the bosom of that Nature whom he had loved so well ; he felt himself nearer God there. Among the different retreats offered him, Ermenonville was chosen ; a beautiful spot, which an ingenuous admiration had already peopled with memories of his *Julie*. But the unfortunate man did not bring the peace of the soul into this Elysium, which he enjoyed in a very imperfect manner, and only for a short time.

His end remains shrouded in mystery. It has been pretended (and this opinion has been adopted by many of his most sincere admirers), that, a prey to incurable physical and moral sufferings, and feeling that he was thenceforth powerless to do good in the world, he believed himself justified in abridging his life, and "throwing himself with confidence into the arms of eternity."²

The principles of Rousseau against suicide do not suffice irrefutably to controvert this opinion : these principles, based rather upon duty to humanity than upon duty to God, were not sufficiently absolute ; and, besides, free will might have been weakened in him by abnormal mental excitement. But other reasons, drawn from the comparison of contemporary testimony, appear to us peremptory. The first account of Rousseau's death, that of the physician, Lebègue de Presle, still seems the most worthy of credence in point of fact ; although it is a little too grandiloquent in style, and Jean-Jacques is made to discourse too much therein.

According to this, on the morning of July 3, Jean-Jacques was seized with great anxiety, and acute pain in the bowels, and felt himself very ill. Believing that his last hour was approaching, he caused the windows to be opened, that he might once more behold the sunshine and verdure. "The sun calls me. . . . Do you see that great light ? . . . That is God. . . . God opens his arms to me. . . . Being of beings !" The crisis, which had been coming on for some hours, supervened. Struck with serous apoplexy, he fell, with his face to the ground. At the cries of Thérèse, M. de Girardin, his host, ran to him.³ He was taken up : a few moments after, he was no more !

¹ A poverty which did not prevent him from sharing his bread with the octogenarian aunt who had brought him up.

² *Relation of Corancez*.

³ The pain in the bowels has given rise to the suspicion of poisoning. It is known

On a calm and brilliant summer night, his body was silently laid under the shade of the poplars, in an islet of a little lake, in the recesses of the beautiful and melancholy solitude of Ermenonville; whither sensitive and meditative minds flocked as to a holy shrine,¹ and where his mortal remains should have been suffered to repose, while erecting to him at Paris that statue which he so justly demanded of his contemporaries, which was promised him by the great Constituent Assembly, and which he still awaits.

Voltaire had ended his life in the midst of every kind of social splendor: he had died, so to speak, on the stage, amidst applause. Rousseau had expired in the silence and mystery of the forests: each according to his nature. The contrast between them had subsisted to the end; yet an infallible public instinct has forever united in the national tradition these two men, the complement of each other. A poet of virile accents, Marie-Joseph Chénier,² has been the voice of posterity:—

"O Voltaire! son nom n'a plus rien qui te blesse!
Un moment divisés par l'humaine faiblesse,
Vous recevez tous deux l'encens qui vous est dû:
Réunis désormais, vous avez entendu,
Sur les rives du fleuve où la haine s'oublie,
La voix du genre humain qui vous réconcilie."³

that he was taken up bleeding from the floor, with a wound in his head; and it has been thence concluded by some that he had put an end to himself with a pistol, and that M. de Girardin, wishing to conceal the suicide, obtained a certificate from the physicians, attributing his death to a serous effusion in the brain. The cast taken from nature by the sculptor Houdon contradicts this hypothesis. No bullet-hole is visible in this, but only the trace of a double contusion, with a laceration of the skin. Besides, the discharge of a pistol, with the muzzle to his forehead, would not have produced a simple hole, but would have fractured his skull, and rendered casting impossible. There is every appearance, therefore, that Rousseau really died of apoplexy. — See all the arguments of the two contrary opinions summed up in Musset-Pathay, *Histoire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, t. I. p. 429, *et seq.*; and in G. H. Morin, *Essai sur la vie et le caractère de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, p. 269, *et seq.*, 1851. This last work, faithful to its title, presents a complete summary of every thing concerning the person of Rousseau. We may add personally, according to the tradition preserved in Houdon's family, that this great artist always denied the pretended suicide of Rousseau.

¹ It became the fashion: every one went thither, the Queen among the rest.

² *Épître à Voltaire*. The Convention, obedient to the sentiment which Chénier afterwards eloquently expressed, united their remains under the arches of the Pantheon. The public sentiment has not so clearly discerned the harmony between Montesquieu and Rousseau.

³ "O Voltaire! his name no longer wounds thee!
A moment divided by human weakness,
You both receive the incense which is your due:
United henceforth, you have heard,
On the banks of the river where hatred is forgotten,
The voice of the human race which reconciles you."

Whatever, indeed, may be the transformations of the future, posterity will never separate or disown them. The religious sentiment of the future, in the broad horizon which it will learn how to embrace, will leave a place, at least among the avenues of the temple, for the man who so valiantly defended humanity and justice, whatever may have been the blemishes and shadows on his brow. Nearer the sanctuary will be placed the man, who, like the fugitive of Troy, from the midst of the crumbling city of the past bore away the gods, the eternal truths, in the skirt of his robe, to transmit them to future generations. Judgment has been passed on Voltaire by friends as by enemies: the memory of Rousseau is more debated. Voltaire is known by glancing over him; by skimming him superficially, as he skimmed every thing: he opens himself to all in broad daylight. Rousseau is known only by accosting him with simplicity, by studying him patiently, by living with him, by pursuing the unity of his thought through its real modifications and apparent contradictions. Posterity, however, is not, and will not suffer itself to be, deceived concerning the character of the work or that of the writer, whether the attacks come from retrogressive doctrines or from scepticism. Through the errors and exaggerations of his mind, the moral aberrations of the first part of his life, and the partial mental deterioration of the latter part, it will know how to distinguish the accuracy of his views, and, above all, of his fundamental sentiments, and the profound sincerity of his heart.¹

But we will not enter upon a future which exceeds the limits

¹ We will sum up here what we have said concerning the *anti-progressive* doctrines of Rousseau. Rousseau discerned a great truth: namely, that the progress of ideas and knowledge may go on without a corresponding progress in morals and sentiments; and that, in this case, there is real decline under the apparent progress. He exaggerated this truth, which the recent theorists of progress for the most part had failed to recognize, on account of the incompleteness of their moral sentiment. There is, in Grimm's *Correspondance* (t. X. p. 70, July, 1778; new edit. 1830), a passage concerning Rousseau, of much greater impartiality than would have been expected from this source, and containing a singular confession from the lips of Grimm: "His soul, naturally susceptible and distrustful, *the victim of a persecution, not cruel, indeed, but at least very strange*; imbittered by misfortunes which were perhaps his own work, but which were none the less real; tormented by an imagination which exaggerated all affections like all principles; and more tormented, perhaps, by the trickeries of a woman (Thérèse), who, in order to remain the sole mistress of his mind, had alienated him from his best friends by causing him to suspect them,—his soul, at once too strong and too weak to bear the burden of life with tranquillity, unceasingly saw itself surrounded with shadowy perils which were seeking its destruction. (Exact details follow concerning Rousseau's idea, that a great league was formed against him; a fixed idea, to which all the incidents of his life, even to the most trifling, related.) On every

of our work. The last years of the ancient régime alone belong to us.

The year 1778 was a solemn one. The disappearance of Voltaire and Rousseau was a great sign. The brilliant eighteenth century was vanishing; and a stormy and sombre age was dawning on the horizon. The era of ideas was closing: the era of action was about to open.

Between the death of Voltaire and that of Rousseau, the first gun had been fired in the American war.

We must retrace our steps for a short space in order to call to

subject foreign to the mania of which we have just spoken, his mind preserved all its strength and energy to the end."

Nothing can be more just than these reflections: and this it is that renders Grimm's conduct to Rousseau inexcusable; for he had very clearly discerned the beginning of the moral malady of this great and unfortunate man twenty years before, and had done every thing to facilitate its progress. We must listen to Grimm in the passage which we have just quoted, and not in the *Memoirs*, or rather the novel, of Madame de Épinai, a species of counterpart of the *Confessions*, found in Grimm's home, and revised at leisure, and to which some have sought to attribute an authority which it in no manner deserves. The words of Madame d'Épinai's son should have some weight in this question: "I have often been the witness," he says, "of the warm reproaches addressed by Madame d'Épinai to Grimm on account of his harsh conduct to poor Jean-Jacques, who had not deserved it." — See the *Œuvres inédites de J. J. Rousseau*, published by Musset-Pathay, p. 389, 8vo, 1825. Rousseau has been thoroughly *denied* of late. We content ourselves with denying, on our side, that it is possible for a true genius, one of those great and legitimate interpreters of the human soul and heart, to exist without the *man* behind the *writer*: we do not mean, of course, without the living ideal, but without the *man*, without the *true* being, whatever may be his inconsistencies. Whence can he draw his inspiration, if he has not the living source within himself? If a *wicked man* and a *liar* could have written *Emile*, it is evident that we may thence infer absolute scepticism concerning all men and all human speech. We will conclude with Jean-Jacques by quoting a panegyric, which the name of the author will doubtless render worthy of interest: —

"It is not for his great talents," says Mirabeau, "that I envy this extraordinary man, but for his virtue, which was the source of his eloquence and the soul of his works. I knew J. J. Rousseau, and I know many of his associates. . . . He was always the same: full of probity, frankness, and simplicity, without any kind of art in concealing his faults or displaying his virtues. Whatever may be thought or said of him for a century to come (the space and limit which envy leaves to detractors), so virtuous a man, perhaps, never existed, since he was virtuous with the full conviction that none believed in the sincerity of his writings and actions. He was virtuous despite nature, fortune, and mankind, which loaded him with sufferings, reverses, calumnies, sorrows, and persecutions. He was virtuous despite the weaknesses which he has revealed in the *Memoirs* of his life. Rousseau gained a thousand times more from his passions than they detracted from him. Whatever abuse may be made of his own confessions, they will always prove the good faith of a man who spoke as he thought, wrote as he spoke, lived as he wrote, and died as he had lived." — See Musset-Pathay, *Hist. de J. J. Rousseau*, t. I. p. 300. Mirabeau was too great not to love virtue, although he had the misfortune not to practise it.

mind the beginning of this revolution, which was nothing less than the enfranchisement of a world.

We have indicated elsewhere¹ the character and progress of the English colonies of North America. After the peace of 1763, the English government wished to make them bear their part in the enormous burdens inflicted by the war upon Great Britain. This was just. But England undertook to enforce instead of requesting it. The Americans submitted without objection to the customs-laws, the commercial taxes, instituted by the British parliament for the whole empire; but, when the internal taxes special to the colonies were in question, they consulted their assemblies, or provincial *parliaments*. The government of George III., under the evil inspiration of Lord Bute, who still ruled the ministry, although he was no longer minister, claimed the right of dispensing with their consent, by virtue of precedents dating back to the times when several of the colonies had, as yet, no legislatures. The English parliament saw in the right to tax the colonies an extension of its prerogative, and willingly seconded the crown upon this point. The Americans would have probably granted what was desired, had it been asked of them: they refused because it was exacted of them. The American Revolution arose, therefore, — and this constitutes its greatness, — from a question of right, far more than a question of material interest. As early as 1764, on the rumor of the plans of the English cabinet, a *Declaration of the Rights of Man* was drawn up in New England. From that time, it could be seen that there was a chasm between Old England and this infant nationality, — between a society of fact and tradition, and a society of right and reason. It is a great error to see in America, as has been sometimes said, only a *sturdy England*.

The institution of a stamp on paper (March 22, 1765) was the signal for the crisis. America, forewarned of the intentions of the English government, was already in a state of fermentation. The Presbyterians, animated by democratic sentiments, had taken advantage of the prevailing agitation to organize themselves into a general association, which they had always been prevented from doing; and this religious association became a vigorous political instrument. The Stamp Act was received with demonstrations of mourning and of profound indignation. The assembly of Virginia, the province from which the liberator of America was about to arise, declared the Stamp Act unconstitutional. Its *Resolutions* had

¹ See vol. I. p. 425.

not the theoretical character of the *Declaration of Rights*, issued in the northern provinces; but the discussion assumed the most threatening aspect within its limits. In this province of the Cavaliers and the Episcopalians, the memory of Cromwell was openly invoked, as if on the Puritan shores of Connecticut. The agitation was still more violent in New England, the hot-bed of American democracy. Men did not content themselves with predicting resistance: they began to organize. At Boston, that glorious city, which was and which still is the true moral centre of North America, — so far as a centre is possible in that varied and free community, — the defenders of *Constitutional Right* assembled under a great elm, which was styled the *Tree of Liberty*. The shoots from the tree of Boston soon covered British America, and were destined later to cross the ocean.

At the suggestion of the assembly of Massachusetts, the province of which Boston was the capital, an extraordinary congress of representatives from the colonies assembled at New York. This congress, with as much moderation as firmness, asserted that the inhabitants of the colonies had the same rights as the natives of Great Britain; and that, being unable to be represented in parliament, they should be so by local assemblies, exclusively invested with the right of taxing them. Congress addressed a petition to the crown, and an address to the two houses, to demand the abrogation of the Stamp Act. As a means of coercion, it was resolved to attack England in her most vulnerable point, commerce; and associations were formed everywhere, the members of which pledged themselves to refuse all British products, at the price of whatever privation, until reparation was granted the colonies. They did more: they prevented the landing and distribution of the stamped paper; and, the administration of civil justice and commerce being thus suspended in point of fact, the assembly of Massachusetts boldly set itself up in opposition to the English parliament, and authorized the citizens to dispense with the stamp in business transactions.

The British government yielded, astonished. Lord Chatham had supported the justice of the cause of the colonists in the parliament. The ministry caused the Stamp Act to be repealed (March 18, 1766), but theoretically maintained the absolute legislative right of the parliament. Lord Chatham returned to power; but as we have already said elsewhere, worn out by cruel physical sufferings, he was only the shadow of himself during his second ministry.

America rejoiced at its victory, and at the return of the great minister; but it rejoiced, as it were, under arms: and it did well; for the colleagues of Lord Chatham, in unison with the parliament, were not long in making a new attempt at arbitrary power by enjoining on the colonists to furnish certain supplies to the troops. The assembly of New York refused. It was suspended by act of parliament until it should have obeyed; after which the parliament levied duties on paper, glass, tea, etc. (1767.)

The Massachusetts assembly gave the signal of resistance by a circular letter to the other colonial assemblies, in which the representatives of Massachusetts claimed at once their natural rights as men, and their legal rights as Englishmen. The governor of the province dissolved the assembly. The following assembly took the same course. It was dissolved in turn (1768). The assemblies of the other colonies openly approved the conduct of the assembly of Massachusetts, and the people of this province replaced the dissolved assembly by an extraordinary convention. The convention, prohibited by the governor as illegal, separated, but left behind it a committee of organization; while the governor, on his side, received troops from England, and installed them in Boston.

British America was agitated for a great purpose. England, meanwhile, was a prey to disturbances which seemed to reveal symptoms of political dissolution rather than of regeneration. In 1769, on the occasion of the arrest of the celebrated Wilkes, indicted on account of his pamphlets, violent riots occurred in London. The people carried through the city a car, in which was seated a young girl, with the inscription, *Liberty*. On one of the sides of the car was written, "Charles I., crowned 1626, beheaded 1649;" on the opposite one, "James II., crowned 1685, expelled 1688;" and behind the car, "George III., crowned 1760, —."

Lord Chatham, a stranger to the last acts of the ministry, retired, and left his colleagues to bear the weight of their unpopularity. They nevertheless retained the majority in a parliament jointly responsible for their mistakes, and took another step in the fatal path which they were pursuing. They thought to intimidate the colonists by passing an act decreeing that the American delinquents should be carried to Great Britain for trial. The exasperation of the colonies reached its height. A new Massachusetts legislature replied by demanding the recall of the British troops and the indictment of the governor, and protesting against the suppression of the jury. The other provinces fol-

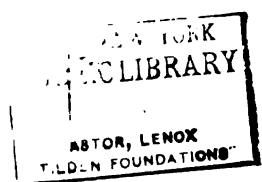
lowed the example. The associations against the importation of British products were reorganized on a large scale : all who did not join them were branded with infamy ; and the wisest and most moderate minds thenceforth familiarized themselves with the thought of a recourse to arms in the last extremity.¹ The first blood shed at Boston, March 5, 1770, in an affray between the soldiers and the people, seemed to gush forth afresh throughout America.²

The British government hesitated the second time. A new head of the cabinet, Lord North, upon the clamor of the English merchants, who were ruined by the interruption of American commerce, caused the duties recently established to be abolished, with the exception of that on tea (1770). The concession was puerile. In such a question of principle, it was all or nothing. The Americans relaxed their rigor towards imports from England, but maintained the exclusion of tea brought by English ships. There was scarcely a truce. The irritation speedily revived on account of an act of parliament, according to which the governor and judges in each colony were thenceforth to be appointed by the crown, and no longer by the colonial assemblies. The Massachusetts assembly explicitly denied to the two houses the right of making laws for the colonies. It was the first time that the supremacy of the parliament had been rejected in express and general terms. The legal resistance tended to become revolution (1772).

The arrival of large cargoes of tea, sent by the East-India Company, determined the crisis. A company of Bostonians, disguised as Indians, boarded the ships on their entrance into the harbor of Boston, and threw the chests of tea overboard. This example was followed in the other provinces (1773). On the other hand, the Massachusetts assembly voted the indictment of the judges who should consent to receive their salaries from the crown. The port of Boston was closed by the parliament by an immense majority, despite an opposition in which Fox and Burke signalized themselves. Lord Chatham, after two years' silence, vainly gave the Opposition the aid of his former renown (1774). Lord North, the head of the ministry, wittily jested on the invocation of *natural rights* by the colonies, — rights which he had seen written nowhere upon parchment.

¹ See a letter from Washington, April, 1769, in his *Life*, translated by M. Guizot, t. I. p. 142.

² This was preceded, however, by a sanguinary combat in the streets of New York, January 19, 20, 1770. — See Appendix. — Tz.

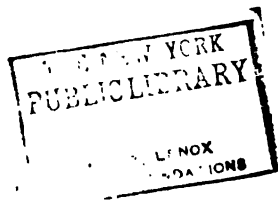




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Lord North.



The colonists did not jest on the other side of the Atlantic. The struggle for liberty was inaugurated under the religious forms borrowed from the Bible by Protestant nations. A general fast was prescribed by all the assemblies, after the example of the assembly of Virginia (June 1, 1774); after which the assemblies formed, by means of deputations, a new General Congress as in 1765, but destined to produce far different results.

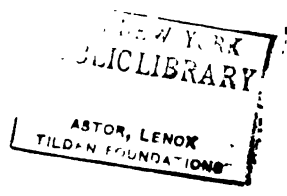
The general association for the interdiction of British imports did not wait for the assembling of Congress to reorganize in the most solemn form. The members pledged themselves not to dissolve until after the reopening of the port of Boston, and the full and entire recognition of the rights of the colonies. The most universal and efficient sympathy aided Boston to endure the suspension of its commercial existence. The neighboring towns refused to profit by the misfortune of the noble city. An admirable unity of sentiment broke forth throughout British America, with the exception of a feeble minority of royalists and aristocrats. The Southern colonies renounced, with a resignation worthy of being an everlasting example, all the articles of luxury and comfort from England which had seemed a necessity to their wealthy planters.

The public enthusiasm redoubled on the arrival of new laws which changed the constitution of Massachusetts (August 8, 1774.) The whole province refused to submit to them. Whoever should accept office under the new constitution was declared infamous and traitorous. The citizens began to refuse the payment of the former taxes constitutionally established. The governor adjourned the annual session of the assembly. The assembly was elected, and reassembled, despite the prohibition of the governor, at Concord, twenty miles from Boston; while the General Congress opened at Philadelphia, the capital of Pennsylvania (September 5, 1774). The instructions of the deputies to Congress, firm but moderate, still repudiated all idea of a separation between the colonies and the mother-country, and only demanded the redressal of grievances. But, at the same time, Congress resolved to succor Boston and Massachusetts by force, if the English government employed force against this city and province; took measures to regulate the prohibition of English importation, and to prepare for the prohibition of exportation to England and for the creation of American manufactures; and recommended to American merchants not to take advantage of the circumstances to increase the price of commodities. Congress framed

a DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, "founded at once on the immutable laws of nature, on the principles of the English constitution, and on positive charters and laws;" and addressed a petition to the King, a memorial to the English people, and circular-letters to the English colonies and to Canada. The address to the Canadians was filled with quotations from Montesquieu. The language of all these papers, full of brilliancy and vigor, attested a society which designed to base itself on right and reason above every thing, as we have said, yet without rejecting tradition, but giving it its just share. Why should it have rejected this, indeed? Traditional liberties had just ended of themselves in the great philosophic liberty of the eighteenth century, like rivers in the ocean! The French Revolution could not combine, with this facility, the two great elements of the life of nations, — philosophic right and historic right; it had not at hand the immediate tradition of liberties constantly in action: thence proceeded the sublime temerity with which it launched into pure reason and absolute right. America, more fortunate, immediately attained its equilibrium: we are still seeking ours.

The Congress separated after convoking another general assembly for May, 1775. The people armed themselves on all sides, and waited. A new parliamentary election took place, meanwhile, in England. The ministry retained the majority. Lord Chatham, Fox and Burke, vainly strove to secure the triumph of conciliatory measures. The Newfoundland fishery was interdicted to the colonies of North America. It was forbidden to transport arms and munitions to the colonies. Massachusetts was declared rebellious. Lord North himself, meanwhile, a man of undecided mind at the bottom, under a show of haughtiness, caused the adoption of a sort of vague and confused compromise, by which it was to be acknowledged, in general terms, that the colonies were obliged to participate in the common expenses.

This was unimportant, and could not arrest the course of events. Hostilities had commenced. The people in the colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut had taken possession of the posts, and carried off the guns. The Governor of Massachusetts attempted, on his side, to seize a dépôt of arms and munitions formed by the colonists at Concord, the seat of the assembly of this insurgent colony. The body of troops sent from Boston on this expedition was repulsed with loss by the Massachusetts militia, who boldly marched to besiege the English in Boston (April, 1775), and were speedily reënforced by the neighboring





GEORGE WASHINGTON

George Washington

colonies. The Massachusetts assembly decreed a provincial paper-currency.¹ The new General Congress decreed an army and a paper-currency for all the colonies united; prohibited all commerce with the British possessions not included in the *Great Alliance*; declared the political compact broken between Massachusetts and Great Britain; and counselled the inhabitants of this colony to form a new government. July 6, 1775, Congress, nevertheless, adopted a manifesto, in which it still protested against the charge of separation, declared that it desired the reëstablishment of the union with the mother-country, and addressed a last petition to the King and new addresses to the English and the Irish; but, at the same time, Benjamin Franklin, who had returned from England, where he had long been the official agent of Pennsylvania, and had used every effort to arrest the British government in its fatal course,² prepared a plan of confederation and *perpetual* union in case the grievances were not redressed. The custom-houses were closed, and the ports were opened to all nations who were willing to protect the commerce of the associated colonies, Great Britain being excluded. It was resolved that the partisans of tyranny should be held responsible for the acts of violence committed by the British troops against good citizens. GEORGE WASHINGTON, of the province of Virginia, was appointed commander-in-chief by Congress.

The war increased. A British army, which had landed at Boston, was unsuccessful in raising the siege. The governors of the Southern provinces, expelled by the colonists, were compelled to wage a piratical warfare on the coasts, after vainly attempting to incite the negroes of the slave colonies to insurrection. The Americans strove to gain over Canada to their cause. The British government, after at first imposing the English laws on Canada, had just restored to it its ancient laws. The nobles were grateful for this restoration of the past; but the rest of the popu-

¹ It is curious to compare the history of the American continental money with that of our *assignats*. The English colonies were already familiar both with the use and the depreciation of the paper-currency. The Massachusetts paper, at the peace of 1763, lost eleven twelfths of its value. During the war of the Independence, in September, 1779, the paper of Congress lost nineteen twentieths; in March, 1780, thirty-nine fortieths; at the close of 1780, seventy-four seventy-fifths. The circulation ceased, about this epoch, in the Eastern and Middle States, and lasted a year longer in the Southern States, where it did not die out until the paper was worth only a thousandth of its nominal value. Congress, in 1784, determined to redeem the paper according to the relative value for which each one had received it. There were about ten thousand millions, at the nominal value. Like the *assignats*, the United States reached the maximum, for a moment, at the close of 1777, but soon receded from it.

² See the *Memoirs of Franklin*.

lation did not share their sentiments, and the great majority of the Canadians refused to take up arms against the Anglo-Americans, and favored their invasion. The forts on the frontier, then Montreal, fell into the power of the expedition despatched by the insurgents. The attack on Quebec was less successful (December 31, 1775). The bishop and the nobles sustained the English. The Americans and their Canadian friends, unable to carry the place by storm, besieged it: but the English received considerable reinforcements; and, after heroic efforts, the Americans were obliged to evacuate Canada in the spring of 1776.

The English government had finally recovered from the absurd contempt which it had at first manifested towards the mutiny of the colonists. In default of native soldiers, it sought to purchase mercenaries everywhere. On the refusal of Catharine II., who was unwilling to sell her Russians, it procured food for the cannon at the price of gold from the petty German princes: Hesse was its principal market of human flesh.¹ It is difficult to describe to what a degree of abjectness and depravity certain of these sovereign houses had fallen, especially that branch of Hesse-Cassel, so glorious at the time of the wars of the Reformation.² The parliamentary opposition protested in vain against this ignoble traffic, and against the appeal made by the government to the savages whom it let loose like wild beasts upon the colonists.

In proportion as the Anglo-American colonists confirmed their principles more directly by their actions, the interest which they inspired in France continued to increase and to invade every thing. Very different but equally energetic sentiments inflamed the whole community. All that had been read, all that had been theoretically conceived, all that had been drawn from the *Spirit*

¹ The example had been set by Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick (the Brunswick of the Revolution).

² An unheard-of and incredible letter from the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel to one of his officers has been cited, which we copy without comment:—

“You cannot imagine the joy which I felt on learning, that, of the nineteen hundred and fifty Hessians engaged in battle, but three hundred and forty-five escaped: this makes exactly sixteen hundred and five killed, and consequently six hundred and forty-three thousand florins due me from the treasury, according to our agreement. The court of London objects that there are a hundred wounded who should not be paid for as dead; but I hope that you have remembered the instructions which I gave you on your departure from Cassel, and have not sought to recall to life by inhuman aid the unfortunates whose days you could only prolong by depriving them of a leg or an arm. This would be making them a fatal gift; and I am sure that they had rather die gloriously than live mutilated and unable to serve me. Remember that, of the three hundred Lacedæmonians who defended Thermopylæ, not a single one returned. How happy I should be, could I say the same of my brave Hessians!”

of *Laws* and the *Social Contract*, was about to be seen realized and living. Even those of whom philosophy had not made a conquest, those who did not love the Americans as freemen, loved them as the enemies of England. The one saw in them the triumph of the new ideal, the greatness of humanity; the others, the avengers of their country. Those most opposed to innovations in France welcomed the innovations in America as fatal to the enemy of France;¹ and very few among the future adversaries of the French Revolution understood the saying of Joseph II., "It is my trade to be royalist."² This society, which was speedily to be divided in so terrible a manner, was for a moment in unison, and postponed its internal problems to await in suspense the intelligence from the other hemisphere.

The French government, which felt the blast of war whistling about it, and which dreaded this war,³ was a prey to lively anxieties. Public opinion bore upon it forcibly. Counsels and incitements came to it from all sides. Among the numerous memorials addressed to the King by private individuals, we remark two, written by a man of ardent and daring mind, of restless and stormy renown, of questionable character, and of prodigious activity, — that Beaumarchais, who was to some only a dangerous intriguer, suspected of pretended crimes;⁴ and to others, to the majority, the heir presumptive of Voltaire, and the successful conqueror of the Maupeou parliament.⁵ Employed by Louis XV. in the secret diplomacy, he had numerous relations with the different English parties, and was allied at once with one of the ministers and with the demagogue Wilkes. In his first memorial (September 21, 1775), he exaggerated the internal perils of England, which he depicted as on the eve of revolution. Politicians

¹ And also by a natural and involuntary sympathy. *Man naturally loves justice*, so long as his passions and interests are not involved against it.

² The answer of Joseph II. to a lady in a Parisian circle, who questioned him on his sentiments concerning the *insurgents*.

³ It had by no means instigated the American Revolution, as has been asserted, not even at the beginning of the disturbances, in the times of M. de Choiseul. This minister, indeed, sent an agent to America to observe what was passing; but he did not even give him an audience on his return, so much was he a stranger to the movements which it has been sought to make a crime or an honor in him. — See *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. I. p. 11.

⁴ His enemies did not hesitate to accuse him of poisoning.

⁵ He had just increased his popularity by his *Barber of Seville*, a work of equivocal taste, and which would have scarcely been accepted in the palmy days of comedy, but which presents original types, and is full of spirit and piquant features, in which we recognise the adversary of Gozman.

have often fallen into this delusion at the sight of disturbances which would suffice to overthrow other governments, but which here produce only a momentary commotion, owing to the habits of legal order and the safety-valves open to the ebullition of popular feeling.

Beaumarchais saw more clearly concerning America, which he declared lost to the mother-country. In the second memorial (February 29, 1776), he sought to demonstrate the necessity of succoring the Americans, if it was desired to save the French West Indies, and even to preserve peace. Victorious, England would fall back on our islands; vanquished, she would make the same attempt to indemnify herself for her losses. Should the parliamentary opposition prevail, and reconcile the two Englands, they would unite against us. It was only possible to preserve peace between France and England by preventing peace between England and America, and counterbalancing the forces of both parties by secret aid to the Americans. He proposed to succor America through the medium of private individuals, who were to be pledged to secrecy.¹

The minister of foreign affairs, Vergennes, hesitated long; the King and Maurepas, still longer. The annoyances and acts of violence of the English navy towards our shipping caused Beaumarchais, who wrote letter after letter to the King and the minister, to gain ground. The question was thoroughly discussed in the council, and treated upon in writing. We have not M. de Vergennes' memorial; but we possess that of Turgot, written in April, 1776, a month before the fall of the illustrious comptroller-general. Turgot set out from a new and unexpected point of view in him. Putting aside his sympathies, and reasoning on the basis of pure interest, he said that it was to the interest of France for England to succeed in subjugating her colonies, because, if they were ruined, England would be weakened thereby; and, if they remained strong, they would always preserve the desire of independence, and would continue to be an embarrassment to the mother-country. The eagle glance of Turgot speedily reappeared in the sequel of the memorial. Whatever might be the immediate issue of the insurrection, he predicted, the definitive issue would be the recognition of the independence of the colonies by England herself, a complete revolution in the political and

¹ *Beaumarchais, sa vie, ses écrits et ses temps*, by M. de Loménie. This extremely conscientious work offers very interesting materials for the history of the closing years of the ancient régime.

commercial relations between Europe and America, and the final emancipation of all the European colonies. "I firmly believe that every other mother-country will be forced to abandon all empire over her colonies, permit an entire freedom of commerce with all nations, and content herself with sharing this freedom with others, and with preserving the ties of friendship and fraternity with her colonies. It is important that Spain should familiarize herself with this idea."¹

Turgot thought, with Vergennes, that offensive warfare should be avoided. In this respect he invoked moral reasons, as well as the state of the finances and that of the army and the navy. Time was needed to regenerate these branches of the King's power; and there was danger of rendering our weakness eternal by making a premature use of our reviving strength. Lastly, the decisive reason was that an offensive warfare would reconcile the mother-country and the colonies by inducing the first to yield. Turgot, in his conclusions, did not, however, oppose the proposals of Beaumarchais; for he advised the government to facilitate measures whereby the colonists could procure the munitions, and even the money, which they needed, by means of commerce, without departing from official neutrality, and without direct aid.

To reëstablish our maritime forces quietly; to put ourselves in a condition to fit out two squadrons at Toulon and Brest; to arrange every thing for a descent upon England should war become imminent, in order to oblige the enemy to concentrate his forces, and to take advantage of this concentration to send expeditions both to the West Indies "and to India, where we should have means of action prepared;" nevertheless, to avoid war until it should become absolutely inevitable, because it would prevent for a long time, and perhaps forever, an internal reform, which was positively necessary, — such were the last counsels of the reformatory minister on the eve of his fall.² These counsels were followed as to the indirect assistance to America, and the reëstablishment of

¹ Shortly after Turgot framed this prophecy, a great insurrection broke out against Spain among the natives of Peru, and was the first presage of the general revolution which was effected thirty years after in Spanish America.

² *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. There is an observation in this memorial, worthy of remark; namely, that it was to the interest of England to commence hostilities from the beginning of April to the end of October, because that was the season when our best sailors employed in the fisheries, and our ships occupied with American commerce, would prove an easy prey; while it was to the interest of France and England to commence hostilities from October to January, because that was the season when the English fishermen were on the way to dispose of their cargoes in Spain, Portugal, and Italy.

our maritime forces :¹ later, the government did not know how to choose the best provisions for the event of war.

Vergennes finally came to a decision, and induced the King to accept the proposals of Beaumarchais. The personal favor of Beaumarchais with Maurepas, whose senile frivolity he charmed, did more, perhaps, than the best reasons of State. A million livres was secretly² given to Beaumarchais to establish a commercial house, for the purpose of supplying America with arms, munitions, and military equipments. The arsenals were to be open to this house ; but it was bound to replace or to pay for the articles delivered to it. The Americans were to repay these advances in produce, with the necessary time and facilities (June, 1776). Beaumarchais obtained a second million from the Spanish government on the recommendation of the cabinet of Versailles, and three millions more from the ship-owners with whom he was associated, and launched into an enterprise in which the lover of progress and the sympathizer blended strangely in him with the speculator. He loved every thing, — renown, money, philosophy, pleasure, and noise above all else. Other commercial houses were likewise assisted with money for the same purpose. The American agent, Silas Deane, who had arrived meanwhile at Paris, was *officially* refused the two hundred cannon, and the arms and equipments for twenty-five thousand men, which he solicited

¹ June 10, 1776, orders were given to fit out twenty ships of the line at Brest and Rochefort. September 27, a series of ordinances appeared, which reformed the administration of the marine; abolished the exorbitant power of clerks and officials; placed every thing concerning the direction and execution of maritime works again under the direction of military officers; determined the form and functions of the permanent councils and the extraordinary council of the marine, eventually commissioned by the King to inquire into the conduct and operations of the commanders of squadrons, divisions, and detached vessels (an institution indispensable for the purpose of enforcing upon the naval commanders the sense of the responsibility which they had sometimes so shamefully evaded under Louis XV.), etc. The chief merit of these reforms appears to have belonged to the Chevalier de Fleurieu, the director of the ports and arsenals, whom the minister Sartine had had the good sense to take as a counsellor. — See the ordinances in the *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. p. 141; and the criticism thereon in L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 386. One of the best provisions was that which joined the port-officers, or *officiers bleus*, plebeians for the most part, with the *ship-officers*, sprung from the privileged body of the marine guards, and caused the *port-officers* to take rank after the *ship-officers* of the same grade. The division of the marine into two bodies, one of which overpowered the other with its pride, had been productive of the worst results.

² This was a secret even to the Americans. According to a letter from M. de Vergennes to the King, May 2, 1776 (see Flassan, t. VII. p. 149), direct pecuniary assistance was transmitted to Congress, under cover of some one by the name of Mon taudoin.

from France, but was *semi-officially* referred to Beaumarchais, who procured every thing, even to artillery and engineering officers, with the cannon, to aid the Americans in making use of them. Among the officers of different arms of the service who enlisted through this medium are remarked the names of Casimir Pulaski, the Polish hero, and La Rouarie, who was afterwards the first organizer of the counter-revolutionary insurrection of La Vendée.¹

The news from beyond the sea during the year 1776 became more and more exciting. Intelligence arrived that the Americans had abandoned the British flag, and had adopted a banner with thirteen stripes, — the token of the alliance of the *Thirteen United States*. Boston was free: as early as March, the British troops had been forced to evacuate this generous city,² and to reëmbark for Nova Scotia. In May, on learning that an army of foreign mercenaries had been despatched to America, the General Congress published a manifesto, demonstrating to the colonies the necessity of wholly abolishing British authority; and addressed to all the colonial assemblies the same recommendation which it had made the year before to Massachusetts; namely, to adopt the form of government best suited to the good of their constituents in particular, and of the *Union* in general.³

July 4, 1776, a date which will never be effaced from the memory of man, appeared the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, framed by Franklin, Jefferson, John Adams, etc.

The preamble and conclusions of this document were the *Social Contract* in practice: —

“When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

¹ Loménie, *Beaumarchais*, etc. The majority, according to the testimony of *La Fayette*, were adventurers, who met with little success on the other side of the ocean.

² The popularity of the name of Boston, in France, was signalized by an incident stamped with that frivolity which we mix with the most serious things. For the English game of *whist*, already in possession of a vogue which it has regained in our day, was substituted another game, called *Boston*.

³ Among the numerous writings which called forth this great resolution was the

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." . . .

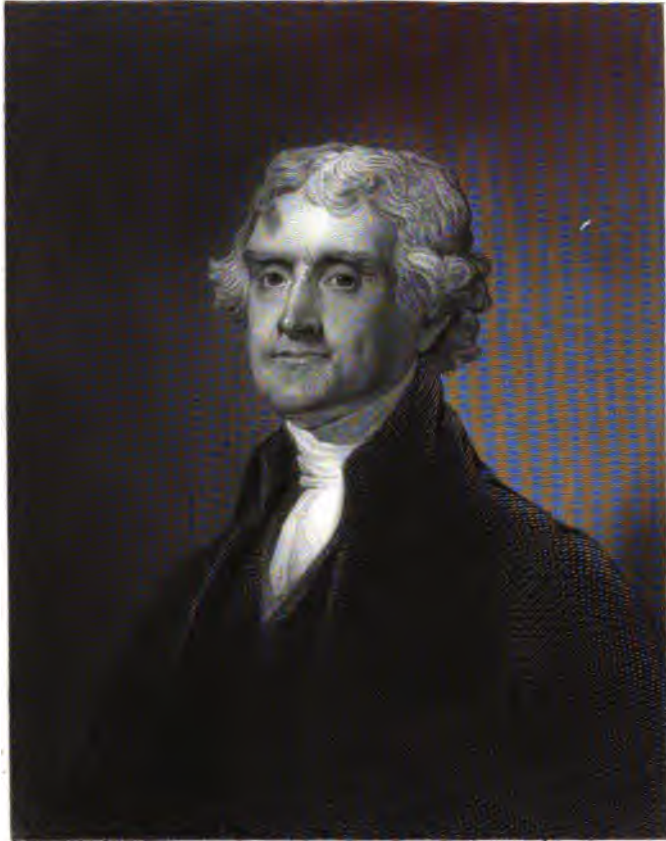
An exposition of the grievances which reduced the American colonies to the necessity of making use of this supreme right ensued:—

"We therefore, the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

Such was the certificate of the birth of the freest, and, it will soon be said, the largest community that ever existed upon earth.¹ The union of Protestant Christianity and the philosophy of the eighteenth century had engendered this great progeny. Two first-class men were to be the saviors and guides of its infancy, each of them especially representing a phase of its double

celebrated pamphlet, *Common Sense*, by that Thomas Paine, who, after contributing to the American Revolution, went to take part in that of France.

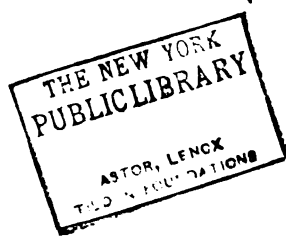
¹ The *Act of Union* of the thirteen States was published three months after the *Declaration of Independence* (October 4, 1776). Each State remained the master of its constitution and internal administration. To the General Congress belonged the right to make war and peace; all foreign relations; the coinage of money; the weights and measures; the mails; the apportionment and use of the national taxes; in fine, every thing concerning the army and navy.



Engraved by J. B. Thompson from an original portrait by M. B. Davis

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Th. Jefferson



origin, — Washington, tradition, but progressive and reformed tradition, enlightened and tolerant Protestantism; Franklin, the spirit of the age, the movement from Locke to Rousseau, philosophy, but religious philosophy.

The young Republic still had severe trials to endure. At the very moment that the Declaration of Independence appeared, the British army and fleet returned reënforced from Nova Scotia, and attacked the islands of the State of New York. *Loyalist* plots broke out in the interior. The treason of the anti-national minority was suppressed by the necessary rigor; but the enemy's army at first met with great successes. Despite their courage and the military talents of their leader, the American militia succumbed before the discipline of the Anglo-Germans. They lost a battle on Long Island, and were compelled to evacuate New York. The English also invaded New Jersey and Rhode Island. The cause of liberty seemed at the last extremity. The army of Washington was for a moment reduced to three thousand soldiers, destitute of every thing. The American general reorganized his army, and baffled misfortune by prodigies of constancy. His admirable operations during the winter of 1776–1777 revived the courage of his fellow-citizens. He returned to New Jersey; held the greatly superior forces of the British in check; and covered Philadelphia, the seat of Congress. From this first campaign could be estimated the worth of this man, a mixture of Fabius and Epaminondas;¹ resembling, as has been so well said,² those monuments whose greatness does not impress one at the first glance, precisely on account of the perfect harmony of their proportions, and because no part astonishes the eye. "The most rational of great men,"³ he was truly the personification of the most rationalistic of nations; and his *august good sense*, to use the happy expression of one of our contemporaries,⁴ was only the distinctive quality of the Anglo-Americans carried to sublimity. •

Meanwhile, the other glory of America, Franklin, had quitted his country in order the better to serve it. After aiding in framing the immortal *Declaration*, he had set out to gain the French alliance. He landed at Nantes, December 17, 1776. The United

¹ Epaminondas, without, however, the poetic and artistic tendency possessed by the Theban, as by almost all the great men of Greece.

² Théod. Fabas, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, art. WASHINGTON. This article, and the article UNITED STATES, by the same author and in the same collection, are two of the best fragments of philosophical history that have been written in our day.

³ Théod. Fabas.

⁴ Eugène Pelletan.

States had admirably chosen their plenipotentiary. Sprung from those working-classes brought to light and elevated in public opinion by Diderot; not a Protestant, like the great body of his countrymen, but a philosophic Deist, of an intermediate shade between Voltaire and Rousseau; a physicist of the first order in this age, so much enamoured with the natural sciences; as simple in his manners and costume as Jean-Jacques and his heroes, yet the wittiest and most acute of men; of a mind wholly French in tone and grace; a marvellous mixture of probity and ability, both of the highest degree; at once the great man of antiquity in certain aspects, and preëminently the man of modern times; redeeming as far as possible what he lacked in ideality by that excellent moral equilibrium which he had in common with Washington, but more varied, more comprehensive, and less austere than the latter, he was adapted to captivate, as he captivated the France of the eighteenth century, by all his sentiments and all his ideas. He won the wise men by the good sense of his genius; the enthusiasts by the brilliancy of his rôle; the frivolous by the originality of his position and appearance. He was in a few days as popular at Paris as at Boston or Philadelphia.

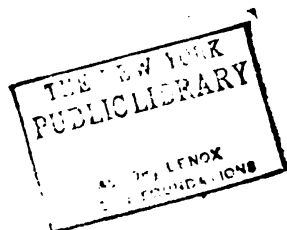
While Franklin labored to gain the French government after French society, and to change the indirect support into a declared alliance, the aid from France began to arrive. Nine vessels freighted by Beaumarchais landed very opportunely at Portsmouth in New Hampshire in April, 1777. A few weeks after, another ship landed on the coast of South Carolina a young man of twenty, a great French nobleman, who had put aside all obstacles, the anger of his family, the express prohibition of the King, and, what was far more difficult to brave, the grief of a young wife, tenderly loved and on the point of becoming a mother, to hasten to offer his sword to the new Republic. This was that LA FAYETTE who was destined to set to Europe, agitated by the perpetual flux and reflux of opinions and interests and degraded by the versatility of minds, the illustrious example of a political constancy of sixty years, and to die in 1834 such as he had revealed himself in 1777 on the shores of America. His steadfast devotion to liberty may have erred at times as to the choice of the path in the darkest hours of our storms; but never for a single day did it forsake its end.

The young French officer, immediately appointed major-general in Washington's army by Congress, shared the rude labors of his leader with an intelligent valor, and an abnegation which the



Lafayette

WASHINGTON, D. C.



great man repaid by unreserved confidence and affection. The enemy had made preparations for powerful efforts. A second British army, which had descended from Canada and made itself master of Lake Champlain, advanced towards Albany and the upper part of the Hudson, under the command of General Burgoyne. Had General Howe, who was confronting Washington on the Delaware, coöperated with Burgoyne at the lower part of the Hudson, America would have been cut in twain, and the republican cause reduced to the most extreme peril. Happily, General Howe turned in the opposite direction, embarked for Chesapeake Bay, and went to attack Philadelphia in the rear. Washington lost the battle of the Brandywine (September 11, 1777), and was compelled to abandon to him the city which had been the seat of Congress. This success, however, was more brilliant than substantial. Washington maintained his ground at a short distance from Philadelphia, and continued to occupy General Howe. During these operations, Burgoyne, who had begun successfully, and had triumphantly made his way from the valley of the Great Lakes into that of the Hudson, was arrested in the forests and mountains of the upper part of the Hudson by the American generals, Gates and Arnold. After a long series of battles, Burgoyne, hemmed in and decimated, capitulated with all his army (October 17, 1777).

The effect was prodigious in Europe. It became more and more difficult for the French government to maintain the equivocal position which it had assumed. The English were incessantly renewing their bitter complaints concerning the presence of the agents of the *rebels* in France,¹ the welcome given to the American privateers in French ports, and the shipments and expeditions despatched from France in behalf of the *rebels*. The cabinet of Versailles disavowed the shipments, and caused them sometimes to be suspended; expelled the privateers, which, sent away from one port, entered another;² declared that it tolerated the agents of Congress only as simple private individuals; and recriminated against the violations of the flag and the vexatious search of French vessels, which the English ventured upon on the very coasts of France. July 4, 1777, the minister of the marine signified to the chambers of commerce that he should protect and reclaim the

¹ In 1776, the English cabinet had demanded the extradition of Silas Deane, a *rebellious subject* of his Britannic Majesty. The answer need not be told. — See full details concerning the diplomacy, in Flassan, t. VII. liv. vi.

² These privateers were, for the most part, French, mixed with a few Americans.

vessels seized by the English on the pretext of commerce with America; and squadrons were fitted out at Toulon and Brest. The minister of foreign affairs, meanwhile, in an official reply to the cabinet of St. James, July 15, still protested the fidelity of France to the existing treaties. England answered by proposing a treaty of mutual guarantee for the security of the possessions of the two crowns in America.

This impertinent proposition was received with the disdain which it deserved: but the position was no longer tenable; it was consistent neither with dignity nor safety. Affairs had changed since Turgot's memorial to the King, and his counsels were no longer applicable. On one hand, the union of the two Englands against us was now to be dreaded, not if we made war, but if we did not make it. The English might at any moment recognize the independence of the United States, as the price of an offensive alliance against France.¹ On the other hand, the Americans had taken the great step: it was with an organized republic that we now had to treat; a republic which, once sure of the French alliance, would see in this alliance the guarantee of its national independence, and would no more renounce it than independence itself.

The American agents redoubled their entreaties, seconded by an immense pressure of public opinion. Every one was carried away by the torrent; after the public, the court, and even the familiars of the Queen. The King, the Queen, and the ministers were almost the only ones who resisted: Maurepas and Vergennes through timidity; Necker through financial spirit and a foreboding of pecuniary difficulties; the King and Queen through monarchical instinct; and Louis, besides, through conscientious scruples concerning the lawfulness of the war. Louis yielded reluctantly, and the last; but he yielded; ² conditionally, however, as will be seen. December 16, 1777, on the intelligence of the disaster to Burgoyne, Maurepas took courage; ³ and M. de Vergennes informed the three commissioners of Congress, Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee, that the King had decided to recognize the independ-

¹ Many Americans inclined to this course through the remembrance of their origin. General Gates, the conqueror of Burgoyne, wrote to this purport to influential Englishmen.—Droz, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 262.

² A jest in very bad taste proved that he did not share the general enthusiasm for Franklin.—See *Mém. de madame Campan*, t. I. p. 234. He afterwards, however, expressed admiration for Washington.

³ *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. I. p. 77.

ence of their country, and to conclude with them a commercial treaty and a contingent defensive alliance.

A double treaty was signed in consequence, February 6, 1778. The first decreed that there should be peace and friendship between France and the United States of America. The contracting parties promised to treat each other mutually, as to commercial intercourse, on the footing of the most favored nation, and to protect each other reciprocally upon the seas. France engaged to interfere with the Barbary States to insure their respect to the American flag. The *droit d'aubaine* was abolished on both sides. The vessels of each power might trade at full liberty with the enemies of the other, only excepting articles contraband of war. Any Frenchman who should take out letters of marque from a foreign power against the United States, or any American against France, should be punished as a pirate. The Most Christian King should grant to the subjects of the United States one or several free ports, where they might bring and sell any produce or merchandise from the said thirteen States.

By the second treaty, the two parties provided for the contingency that Great Britain, "through resentment for the intimacy and good understanding" which the preceding treaty had just established, should break the peace with France. "In case that war should be declared between France and Great Britain" during the existing war between the United States and England, his Majesty and the United States were to make common cause. The essential and direct aim of the present defensive alliance was efficiently to maintain the liberty, sovereignty, and independence of the United States, both with respect to government and to commerce. The two parties were, each on its side, and in the manner which it might judge most suitable, to use every effort in their power against the common enemy. In case that either party should undertake any separate enterprise in which it should need the coöperation of the other, the aid to be furnished and the compensating advantages were to be regulated by a separate agreement. In case that the United States should see fit to attempt the reduction of the British power still remaining in the northern part of America or in the Bermuda islands, these countries or islands, in the event of success, were to be confederated with the United States, and to be under their jurisdiction. His Most Christian Majesty forever renounced the possession of any part of the continent of North America which was then or had been recently under the power of the King and crown of Great Britain. In

case that his Most Christian Majesty should see fit to attack any of the islands in the Gulf of Mexico, or near this gulf, which were then under the power of Great Britain, all of the said islands, in the event of success, were to belong to the crown of France. Neither of the two powers was to conclude peace or truce with Great Britain, without first obtaining the formal consent of the other; and both parties mutually engaged not to lay down their arms until the independence of the United States had been insured by the treaty or treaties which should terminate the war. His Most Christian Majesty and the United States agreed to invite or to permit other powers, who might have experienced wrongs on the part of England, to accede to the present alliance. The two powers mutually guaranteed to each other forever,—to wit, the United States to his Most Christian Majesty the existing possessions of the crown of France in America, as well as those which it might acquire by the future treaty of peace; and his Most Christian Majesty to the United States their sovereignty, liberty, independence, etc., as well as their possessions, and the accessions or conquests which their confederation might obtain, during the war, of any of the States possessed then or formerly by Great Britain in America.¹

This contingent alliance, this evasive manner of provoking a collision which had become inevitable, was in some manner strange and unworthy; but it had been necessary, in order to overcome the scruples of the timorous Louis XVI., to suppose a material aggression of the English prior to any collective action against them.

Another important observation should be made concerning this compact of alliance; namely, that the political system now styled *Americanism*, that is, the claim of the United States to exclude the European powers from the American continent, was already strongly indicated by the renunciation of Canada and Nova Scotia, obtained from France.

At the news of this second *treaty of Paris*, which was about to annihilate that of 1763, so fatal to France and so glorious to England, the English cabinet, in consternation, made a last effort to compound with the Americans, the most serious one that it had yet attempted. It no longer talked of *pardon*, but of a *treaty* with Congress. Lord North presented to the parliament a plan of reunion and accommodation based upon the representation of the colonies in parliament (February 17, 1778).

¹ See the treaty in Martens, *Recueil de Traité*, t. II. p. 587, *et seq.*

It was too late. A people never retracts such an act as the *Declaration of Independence*. Congress refused to negotiate so long as the enemy's armies and fleets had not quitted the United States, and their independence had not been formally recognized (April 22).

March 13, the ambassador from France had notified the cabinet of St. James of the treaty of amity and commerce signed between France and the United States of North America, "who were in full possession of the independence proclaimed by their declaration of July 4, 1776." His Most Christian Majesty thought it incumbent upon him to inform the court of London that the contracting parties had stipulated for no commercial advantage in favor of France which the United States were not at liberty to grant equally to any other nation. The King was persuaded that the court of London would find in this communication new proofs of his Majesty's disposition for peace; and that his Britannic Majesty, animated by the same sentiments, would take efficient measures to prevent the disturbance of the commerce of French subjects with the United States. With this just confidence, the ambassador from France deemed it superfluous to apprise the British ministry that the King, his master, being determined efficiently to protect the lawful liberty of the commerce of his subjects, and to sustain the honor of his flag, his Majesty had taken contingent measures in consequence with the United States of North America.¹

England replied only by the recall of her ambassador. An embargo was laid on British ships in France (March 18). England retaliated by the same measure. March 21, the three American plenipotentiaries were received in solemn audience by the King at Versailles. Prolonged applause welcomed the representatives of the new republican world to the palace of Louis XIV. Franklin and his colleagues quitted the residence of the King of France only to repair officially to that of the young wife of the man who was destined, eleven years after, to inaugurate the French Revolution on the ruins of the Bastille,—that of Madame de La Fayette.

When La Fayette, at Washington's headquarters, read the words of the French government in the notification of March 13, "*The United States . . . in possession of the independence proclaimed by their declaration of such a day,*"—"This is a great

¹ Flaccan, t. VII. p. 167.

truth," he exclaimed, "which we will remind them of some day at home."¹

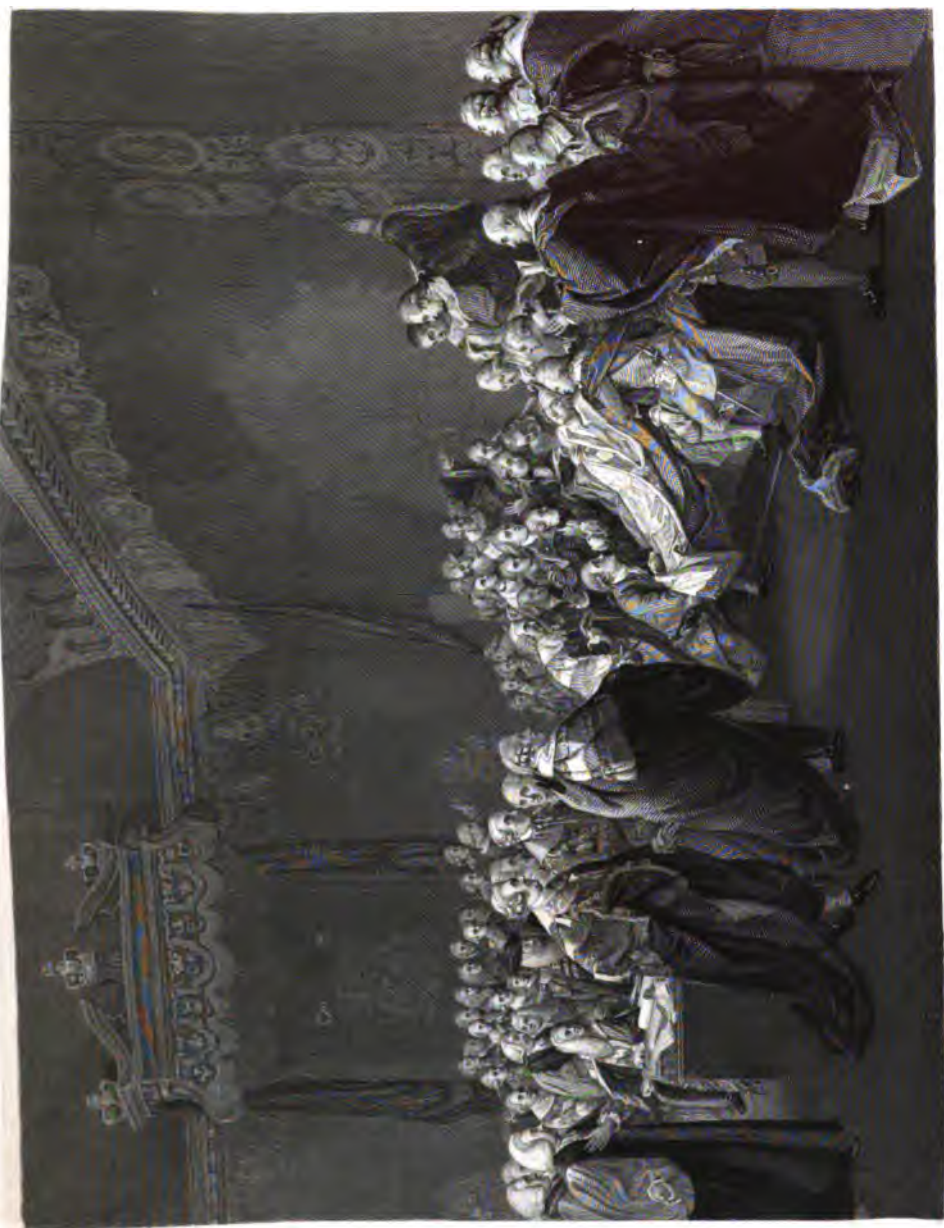
The British parliament, meanwhile, had been the scene of the greatest excitement. It was felt that the tardy propositions of the ministry had no chance of acceptance from America. A fraction of the Opposition proposed to recognize the independence of the colonies. At this intelligence, the aged Lord Chatham, sick and exhausted, caused himself to be carried from his bed to the House of Lords; and there, pale, wrapped in his coverings as in a winding-sheet, and leaning upon his son, who was to be the second Pitt, he protested with despair against the idea of the dismemberment of the British empire,—against the separation of those Anglo-Americans whom he had defended against arbitrary power as British citizens, but whom he would never recognize as an independent nation. He conjured his fellow-countrymen to perish rather than humble the flag of England before the House of Bourbon. One of the leaders of the Opposition, the Duke of Richmond, having hinted that England was unable to sustain a collision with the House of Bourbon united with the Americans, and continuing to insist on the necessity of recognizing the independence of the United States and maintaining peace with France, Lord Chatham, transported with indignation, rose from his seat to reply; but the violence of the feelings which agitated him had destroyed his remaining strength, and he fell fainting. He was carried away amidst general consternation. He languished a few weeks, then expired.

The death of this powerful enemy of France seemed a fatal sign to England. He seemed to carry away with him the fortunes of his country.

There was no longer reason for hesitation. The French government had already suffered the season most favorable for the commencement of hostilities to escape. It was necessary to choose carefully where to direct the blows, and to strike hard and swiftly. April 15, a squadron of twelve ships and five frigates set sail from Toulon under the command of Vice-Admiral d'Estaing, the last officer who had sustained the honor of the French flag on the seas in the deplorable Seven-Years' War.²

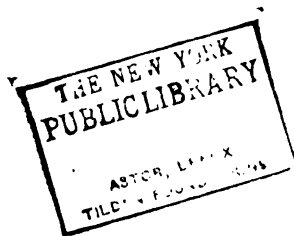
¹ *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. I. p. 177.

² After the fall of the French settlements in India, when our flag had disappeared from the Eastern seas, D'Estaing, setting out from the Isle of France with one of the Indian Company's vessels and a small frigate, captured and destroyed the English factories on the Persian Gulf, then those of Sumatra, and took several of the ships belonging to the English East-India Company.—See L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 346.



DEATH OF CECILIA.

London: Published Nov. 1. 1852. by John Major, 40 Fleet Street.



This squadron carried to America a minister plenipotentiary accredited to Congress by Louis XVI., Gérard de Raineval, who had been the signer of the two treaties of February 6.

The instructions of M. Gérard, dated March 30, were, among others, to decline all requests for subsidies, to see that the military operations were concerted with Count d'Estaing, and to avoid explicit engagements relative to the conquest of Canada and other British possessions. The cabinet of Versailles was not sorry for the United States to retain in their neighborhood some cause of anxiety which would make them feel the value of the French alliance. Washington, through other motives, aided the French minister on this point, and showed that it was necessary to liberate the territory of the thirteen confederated States before acting abroad. The French government yielded with respect to the subsidies; at least, it advanced three millions in 1778, and other sums during the following year.¹

The despatch of the squadron from Toulon was an excellent measure; but this was the only good thing that was done. The King and the special ministers were alike incapable of viewing the war on a large scale, and of making skilful plans for the campaign. The minister of the marine, Sartine, had shown activity,² and issued useful regulations; but his views did not exceed the *matériel* of the administration in time of peace. As to the ministry of war, it was no longer filled by the aged Saint-Germain, who, worn out, and fallen into discredit by his eccentricities and inconsistencies, had resigned his office at the beginning of September, 1777,³ and had been replaced by a personage of very little value, the Prince de Montbarrei, who was ruled by obscure influences and female intrigues. No advantage was therefore taken of the fact that England, herself indifferently governed,

¹ Gardien, *Histoire des traités de paix*, t. IV. pp. 301-387; one million in 1779, four millions in 1780, four millions in 1781, and six millions in 1782.

² In June, 1778, we had sixty-four men-of-war of from fifty to a hundred and fifty guns (*Mercure de France*, June, 1778). These sixty-four ships had been left us by Choiseul, with fifty frigates.

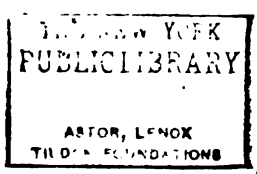
³ He died January 15, 1778. His only acts of any importance, after the fall of the great reformatory minister, which he survived for some time, were the disorganization of the Hôtel des Invalides (he left only fifteen hundred men therein, and dispersed the rest throughout the provinces, June 17, 1776), and the reorganization of the Military School (July 17, 1777) on a somewhat singular plan. This was the formation of a corps of cadets of noble birth, who paid for their tuition; to which were added gratuitously the best pupils of the new military colleges founded in the provinces in the place of the old school. — See *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. p. 58. The idea of making the King the keeper of a boarding-school was greatly ridiculed.

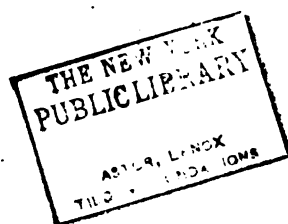
was not ready for war. The cabinet of Versailles, including M. de Vergennes, began by not seeing that war was inevitable, and flattering itself that England would draw back; then, the conflict once certain, it did not realize the necessity of commencing hostilities vigorously on the spot, and striving to destroy the main props of the enemy, — America and India. The royal government never would understand any thing of India. The immense progress of the English, who were realizing in Hindostan, under Clive and Hastings, the plans of Dupleix and Bussy, with the addition of crime, could not arouse the cabinet of Louis XVI. from its heedlessness. The favorable circumstances, and the advantage which France might derive from an alliance with Hyder Ali, that Mussulman hero who had founded a great state in the south of the peninsula, and imposed a disadvantageous peace upon the English presidency of Madras in 1769, were nevertheless well known at Versailles. Nothing was sent to India; and the powerful fleet which had been fitted out at Brest was retained for several weeks inactive, because the old King of Spain, Carlos III., had offered his mediation instead of his assistance. The Spanish government had been very willing to participate in the indirect aid furnished by France to the *insurgents*; but it felt much hesitation in openly espousing their cause: the example seemed too dangerous to its own colonies.

England replied to the offer of mediation, that it was necessary, first of all, that France should withdraw her note of March 13.¹ Even after this answer, Louis XVI. still hesitated to order the fleet to set sail from Brest: he was still unwilling to fire the first gun; a scruple the more puerile, inasmuch as it was impossible that D'Estaing would not come to blows in the American waters.

The *first gun* was at length fired. The English were the first to appear in our waters. An English fleet of twenty ships, under the command of Admiral Keppel, while reconnoitring near Brest, encountered two French frigates off the Island of Ushant (June 17). War not being declared, Keppel did not immediately attack the frigates, but summoned them to lay to at his stern, and answer his questions. The more advanced of the frigates, the *Licorne*, refused. He fired upon her: she discharged a broadside, then surrendered. The second frigate, the *Belle Poule*, commanded by La Clochette, crowded sail in order to escape: pursued and overtaken near the coast by the English frigate *Arcturion*, she disabled the latter after five hours' conflict, forced her

¹ Flanagan, t. VII. p. 171.





to retire to the fleet, and returned victorious to Brest amidst the acclamations of the navy and the populace.

Thus was inaugurated the American War.

Keppel, informed of the superiority of the French fleet by the papers found on the *Licorne*, returned to Portsmouth. The fleet of Brest, under the command of Lieutenant-General d'Orvilliers, at length set sail, July 8. Its long delay had permitted the merchant fleets from the English West Indies and the Levant peacefully to regain the English ports, and to carry thither great resources in men and merchandise. It was thirty-two ships of the line strong, and was divided into three squadrons, commanded, the first by D'Orvilliers in person; the second by Lieutenant-General Duchaffaut; and the third by the young Duke de Chartres, who had for his adviser Commodore La Motte-Piquet. July 23, the French fleet encountered the enemy between the Island of Ushant and the Scilly Isles. Keppel, reinforced, had again put to sea. After four days of skilful evolutions, which attested the progress of our navy in tactics since the peace of 1763,¹ the two naval armies engaged on the morning of July 27. They numbered each thirty ships; two of our vessels having been separated from the fleet by accident. The English had more three-deckers than we. Special historians have described the admirable manœuvres of this action, hotly disputed for some hours. The English were forced to acknowledge with anguish the superiority of our marine artillery, reorganized by Choiseul. In the afternoon, the French admiral made an attempt to break the enemy's line, which should have been decisive: unfortunately, his signal was not immediately understood by the squadron commanded by the Duke de Chartres. The duke went in person to ask explanations from D'Orvilliers, then returned to execute the orders of his superior. But precious time had been lost: the English fleet was not separated, but was only arrested in a movement which it had begun. It formed anew beyond the range of the cannon, and did not return to the charge, although it had the weather-gauge, and the French were awaiting it. The greater part of the English ships were dismasted, and almost unable to manœuvre. The next day the English repaired to Plymouth, and the French to Brest.

The victory, therefore, remained incomplete; but it was certainly much for a navy, burdened by the recollections of the

¹ D'Orvilliers had for a major-general Du Pavillon, the inventor of a new system of naval tactics, which introduced the most decisive improvements into the language of signals.— See *Biographie universelle*, art. DU PAVILLON, by M. de Rossel.

Seven-Years' War, to have repulsed with advantage, with equal, or even with somewhat inferior forces, the principal English fleet, admirably commanded. The first intelligence of the action of Ushant was therefore received with anger at London, and with rejoicing at Paris. The Duke de Chartres, who returned to Paris while the fleet was undergoing repairs at Brest, was covered with applause at the Opera, and the houses were illuminated in his honor around the Palais-Royal. In a few days, however, accusing rumors effected a reaction in public opinion. It was pretended that the prince had shown nothing but hesitation, and want of spirit; and that he had neither obeyed the admiral, nor listened to the counsel of the commodore, La Motte-Piquet, commissioned to be his guide, under the title of his second in command. Some went so far as to say that he had been concealed at the bottom of the hold. The truth of these rumors was, that the admiral, D'Orvilliers, had written to the minister of the marine that "the want of attention of the first ships of this squadron (that of the Duke de Chartres) to his signals had alone deprived the French flag of the most brilliant triumph in the action of July 27." But it was not the less true, that La Motte-Piquet, one of the bravest and most able mariners possessed by France, far from throwing the blame on the Duke de Chartres, took upon himself the reproach of the admiral, and justified himself with great warmth. It is very possible that no one was to blame in the affair, and that the delay in the manœuvring proceeded from the difficulties of the new system of signals, the use of which had not yet become familiar. The charge of cowardice against the Duke de Chartres was unjust: this prince was lacking in strength of soul and moral dignity, but not in physical courage.

This incident was destined to be productive of the gravest consequences in the future. The Duke de Chartres imputed to the Queen and her familiars the propagation of rumors injurious to his honor; and already at variance with the Queen, after relations of great friendliness at first, he conceived an implacable hatred of her, which was to be alike fatal to both.

The immediate consequences had already been vexatious. The admiral and the minister of the marine agreed in endeavoring to induce the prince to quit his military command. The King was unwilling to remove him abruptly. These dissensions retarded the departure of the fleet. Meanwhile the English were capturing our merchant-men on all sides, owing to the culpable negligence of the minister of the marine, who had protected them

neither by cruisers nor escorts:¹ none of the English convoys, on the contrary, were disturbed. The fleet set sail again, August 17. The Duke de Chartres had obtained permission to reappear therein temporarily, to cover his disgrace; but he soon caused himself to be recalled to Brest, and exchanged his rank as lieutenant-general of the navy for that of colonel-general of hussars.

The fleet made a third sortie. This time it was forced to return through lack of men and money (October 8). The men had not been paid for several months. Sartine, in his correspondence with the admiral, threw the responsibility of this on Necker, who afterwards, in turn, with more probability, accused the minister of the marine of disorder and waste. A few cruisers were finally sent to the aid of commerce, and we began to take prizes in our waters, which this year were far from indemnifying us for those of the enemy.

This first campaign in European waters had therefore been sterile, or even injurious, in its material result, honorable to our navy in its moral effect,² and dishonorable to the government, which showed itself greatly inferior to the emergency.³

Its culpable negligence had been productive of consequences in India, which might easily have been foreseen. At the first news, not of war, but of the imminence of war, the Supreme Council of Calcutta, which governed British India, suddenly attacked the little that remained to the French in those vast regions (July, 1778). Chandernagore, and the factories of Masulipatam and Karikal, surrendered without striking a blow. An army and a small squadron proceeded to Pondicherry, which the French had rebuilt from its ruins. A small French squadron, equal in force to that of the English (five ships of from twenty-four to sixty-four guns on each side), engaged in an indecisive action (August 10). A few days after, the French commodore, Tronjoli, quitted the roadstead of Pondicherry, and set sail for the Isle of France, pretending that he was unable either to revictual on the coast, or to wait for reënforcements, as the English were about to be reën-

¹ The enemy captured prizes to the value of more than forty million, and carried off many of our sailors.

² There were several admirable single engagements. Two French frigates took two English frigates of equal or superior strength. A French ship forced an English ship and frigate to retreat. — L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 430.

³ See the details of the campaign in L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime*, t. II. pp. 405–432; *Hist. impartiale de la dernière guerre* (by De Lonchamps), t. I. p. 349, et seq., Amsterdam and Paris, 1785; *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, by Fr. Soultès, t. III. pp. 81–101, Paris, 1787; Adolphus, *History of England under George III.*, book xxxv.

forced and to overpower him.¹ However culpable this officer may have been, the ministry was at least as culpable as he. The brave Governor of Pondicherry, Bellecombe, abandoned in an almost defenceless place, with a weak garrison, did not capitulate until after seventy days' siege and forty days' intrenchment, and then on condition of being carried to France with his companions in arms (October 17, 1778).

A few months after (March 29, 1779), the English took possession of Mahé almost without striking a blow. This place, so strong by its position alone, had neither soldiers nor munitions. The French flag disappeared once more from India.

It at least floated with honor in the American waters!

The squadron which had sailed from Toulon under Vice-Admiral d'Estaing, detained by contrary winds, had been nearly three months in reaching the mouth of the Delaware (April 13-July 7). This delay saved the British army which was occupying Philadelphia, and which had time to reëmbark and to make its way to New York. Had D'Estaing arrived three weeks sooner, the army and squadron of Admiral Howe would have been shut up, as if in a snare, between Washington's army and the French squadron, superior in numbers. The new allies attempted to indemnify themselves for the loss of this glorious opportunity. A double attack by land and sea was planned against Rhode Island, an important maritime position held by the enemy, in the heart of the United States. The narrows leading to Newport, the capital of the State, were brilliantly forced by D'Estaing,² seconded by excellent officers, among whom was signalized Suffren, destined to a great and speedy renown. A British ship, five frigates, and a corvette, were burned by their commanders, to avoid falling into the power of the assailants. The French were about to land in order to coöperate with the Americans, who had already made a descent on Rhode Island, when the squadron of Admiral Howe, reënfined by several vessels, was signalled. D'Estaing passed through the channel anew to meet the British fleet, which fled before him, and which he overtook. The signal for battle was about to be given, when a furious storm, which lasted forty hours, separated the two squadrons, tossed them about, and shattered them (August 11-13). The tempest calmed,

¹ The English were greatly superior on the land; but their naval forces were very indifferent at this moment in those waters.

² He had previously captured thirty merchant-men and transports, and fifteen hundred British recruits.



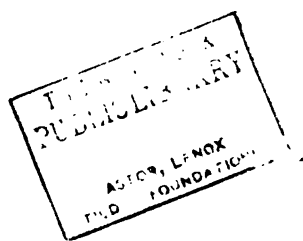
Portrait by Sir Allan Ramsay

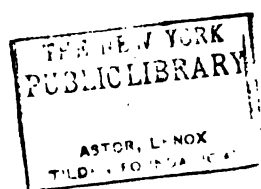
Portrait by Sir Allan Ramsay

ADMIRAL RICHARD HOWE, EARL HOWE.

Howe

ADAM SMITH







Jn^o Sullivan

D'Estaing's ship, dismasted, and razed like a hulk, escaped the attack of a vessel of the enemy only through the indomitable firmness of the French admiral. D'Estaing rallied his ships; but he believed it impossible to resume operations against Newport, and set sail for Boston; which compelled the Americans to raise the siege of Newport, and to evacuate Rhode Island.

This want of success of an enterprise so well begun threatened to break the still fragile alliance of the French and the Anglo-Americans. The latter declared themselves abandoned, and almost betrayed. Much bitterness ensued between the leaders, and quarrels between the people and their foreign auxiliaries. La Fayette, whose great military services had invested him with deserved popularity, employed himself with zeal and authority in calming the irritation; and the generous offer made by D'Estaing, to put himself, the Vice-Admiral of France, under the command of a simple lawyer transformed into a general (Sullivan), to act on land with his land forces, effaced the ill-founded resentment. The concord was not again disturbed during the rest of the war.

D'Estaing, in conformity with his instructions, after aiding in putting Boston in a posture of defence against the British navy, powerfully reënforced, soon after quitted the shores of the United States for the West Indies, where he found the French colonies rejoicing over an important conquest. The Governor of the Windward Islands, that Marquis de Bouillé who was destined to play an important part in the counter-revolutionary party, had just effected a descent on the Island of Dominica, and forced the English garrison to surrender after a feeble resistance (September 6-8); thus ridding Guadeloupe and Martinique of a most dangerous proximity. Unhappily, this advantage was counterbalanced by the loss of the Island of St. Lucia, which was defended only by a handful of soldiers and militia, and which fell into the power of a British squadron (December 13-14). D'Estaing attempted at once to retake St. Lucia with twelve ships against six. He vigorously attacked the enemy's squadron; but the latter, bringing its broadside to bear on him from the bay styled the Great Harbor, under the protection of two land-batteries, by its excellent position and obstinate defence, rendered the superiority of numbers useless. The land-forces were still less successful: destitute of artillery, they failed in their attack on the batteries and the intrenchments, which the English had hastily constructed on heights difficult of access, and beat a retreat after three assaults, abandoning seven or eight hundred dead or wounded (December

18). D'Estaing, apprised that a strong squadron of the enemy was expected from the United States, was forced to abandon the enterprise, and to retire to Martinique.

We again experienced in the same year another inevitable loss in America. The British occupied the Islands of St. Peter and Miquelon, the fortification of which had been interdicted by the treaty of 1763; and sent back to France all the population, numbering from two to three thousand souls. They thus held the whole of the great Island of Newfoundland (September, 1778). The events of this winter were to their advantage on the American continent as well as in the West Indies. A double expedition, moving from New York by sea and from Florida by land, invaded the southernmost of the thirteen United States, Georgia, and took possession of the capital, Savannah, and the greater part of the country (December, 1778-January, 1779).

It was not the same in the African waters. In the months of January and February, 1779, a small French squadron retook, from the English, St. Louis in Senegal, ceded by the treaty of 1763; concentrated there the defensive resources of Gorée, which was abandoned as a less advantageous post; and destroyed the English factories at Gambia, Sierra Leone, and along the whole coast, from Cape Blanco to Cape Lopez. The prizes captured amounted to more than fifteen millions.

The material losses counterbalanced each other, and the disasters predicted to the English government by the Opposition had not yet been realized; but it must have deeply wounded British pride, not only that the French navy had shown itself equal to the English navy in the great evolutions of one fleet against another, but that it had had the advantage in almost all the single engagements. A considerable number of English frigates had been conquered by vessels equal or even inferior in strength,¹ and carried in triumph into the French ports.

France became more and more animated in the strife. When La Fayette returned in the American frigate, the *Alliance*, to

¹ The most heroic of these encounters was that of the *Trition*, of thirty guns, with an English ship of forty guns. The French captain, Caluclan, had been borne away mortally wounded; when, learning that his crew were beginning to falter, he ordered himself to be carried again upon deck. "My children," he exclaimed, "I have but a few hours to live: let me not have the pain of dying without seeing you the masters of the English frigate. Come, my children, a last effort, and she is yours!" The Englishman was taken, and Caluclan died contented. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 5. The English royal navy had already lost fifty-six ships in the spring of 1779. — *Ibid.*, p. 82.

resume his place in the French army, he did not find in the King and the ministers either the will, or, it must be confessed, the power, to punish his glorious disobedience. The King was friendly: the Queen, with her habitual vivacity, was completely subjugated by the universal enthusiasm inspired by the youthful and illustrious volunteer of liberty (February, 1779).

The naval classes in France had been increased eleven thousand five hundred sailors by the ordinance of January, 1779. The activity of our dock-yards and armaments was not slackened. Our privateers, encouraged by two ordinances of July, 1778, which granted them great advantages, organized on the largest scale, and formed veritable auxiliary squadrons of the royal navy.¹ The corporations recommenced their patriotic gifts. The States of Artois had offered a frigate of thirty-six guns. The British parliament, on its side, had voted an appropriation for seventy thousand soldiers and marines for the year which was just beginning. England foresaw that the number of her enemies was about to increase, and that the *Family Compact* would draw in the King of Spain; while she could not even count upon the active coöperation of Portugal, which would have gladly escaped from its oppressive alliance.²

England had hoped to witness the renewal of the Continental diversion which had served her so well in the Seven-Years' War. A great quarrel had arisen in Germany, which might involve France. The Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian Joseph, had died December 30, 1777; and with him had become extinct that *Wilhelmine* branch of Bavaria which had played so important a part in the political and religious history of the Empire. His legal heir was the head of the other Bavarian branch, the *Rodolphine* branch; that is, the Elector-Palatine, Charles Theodore. The Emperor Joseph II., however, who had long cast a covetous glance upon Bavaria, exhumed, both in his own name, as the head of the Empire, and in that of his mother, as the Queen of Bohemia and the Archduchess of Austria, those ancient pretensions which the chaos of the Germanic archives never failed to furnish in like cases. He laid claim to the greater part of the succession, and

¹ A company at Nantes equipped six frigates of thirty-six guns, and two corvettes; and a Bordeaux company fitted out twelve light vessels. The State furnished them with artillery gratuitously, and abandoned to them two-thirds of the prizes: the other third was to go to the fund for invalid sailors.

² Portugal had a new king, Don Pedro III. The death of Joseph I. had caused the fall of the celebrated minister, Pombal.

wrung from the aged Maria Theresa her consent to the introduction of his troops into Bavaria. The Elector Palatine, who had no legitimate child, suffered himself to be gained over by the promise of a great establishment for his natural son, and ceded almost all the inheritance to Austria (January, 1778), without taking into consideration the rights of his nephew, the Duke of Deux-Ponts. Joseph II. had omitted the aged Frederick from his calculations. The King of Prussia still knew how to mount a horse, and was not the man to permit Austria, without striking a blow, to increase her power by the addition of a large province. He made himself the champion of the heir-presumptive who was sacrificed, — the Duke of Deux-Ponts, — and of the Elector of Saxony, who laid claim to the allodial lands of Bavaria, which were heritable in the female line. He began by prudently sounding the courts of Versailles and St. Petersburg; reminding the one of the treaty of Westphalia, of which it was a guaranty, and setting forth to the other the interest which it had in maintaining the balance of power in Germany. Austria, meanwhile, claimed the contingent assistance of France against Prussia, by virtue of the treaty of 1756; as if this unhappy treaty had made France the slave of all her ambitious schemes.

The French cabinet was in a delicate position. The Queen was beginning to acquire unaccustomed influence with her husband,¹ and did not sufficiently forget that she was born an *Austrian*; a fatal name, which was one day to be the sentence of death to the daughter of Maria Theresa! The remembrance of the counsels of a dying father, and the evident interest of France, nevertheless prevailed over her in part with Louis XVI. Maurepas and Vergennes were anti-Austrian, so far as it comported with the levity of the one and the circumspection of the other. France signified her neutrality to Austria, referring to the Diet of the Empire to know whether or not the treaty of Westphalia had been respected. Nevertheless, in order somewhat to appease the Emperor, who complained bitterly of this *defection*, the government had the weakness secretly to furnish him the subsidy of fifteen millions promised by the treaties.² By way of compensation, the French cabinet served Frederick by using its influence at Constantinople

¹ The art of the surgeons had overcome the obstacle which had hitherto rendered their union sterile. She had given to the King, September 19, 1778, a daughter, — Madame, afterwards the Duchess d'Angoulême.

² Soularie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 56; *Mém. de Mme. Campan*, t. II. p. 29.



General Sir John Hope



to arrest the hostilities which had recommenced between the Russians and the Turks on account of the interpretation given by Catharine II. to the treaty of Kanardschy.¹

The King of Prussia, certain of having nothing to fear from France, took the offensive, and fell upon Bohemia, which Joseph II. defended in person, assisted by the old generals of the Seven-Years' War (July, 1778). The young Emperor avoided the decisive engagement sought by the aged King. The Prussians, after ravaging Bohemia, returned to Silesia, and wrested from the Austrians the southern extremity of Silesia which they had preserved at the peace of 1763 (September-November). The hostilities, carried on against the wishes of Maria Theresa, went no farther. The Empress-Queen requested the mediation of Russia, then of France; which was a tacit renunciation of her pretensions, or rather those of her son. The basis of the accommodation was agreed upon as early as January, 1779. Joseph II. nevertheless raised up one difficulty after another, until news was received of the agreement which had been signed, March 21, at Constantinople. Turkey had accepted the Russian interpretation of the treaty of Kanardschy, which gave Catharine the Crimea under the shadow of a fictitious independence, and undermined the authority of the Porte over Moldavia and Wallachia; Russia consenting to evacuate the coast of the Black Sea between the Bug and the Dniester, of which she had just taken military occupation. Russia now had her hands free, and could keep the engagements of the compact which bound her to Prussia. Joseph II. resigned himself to necessity. The treaties signed May 10, 1779, at Teschen in Silesia, secured to Austria, for her sole share in the Bavarian succession, the portion of the regency of Burghausen between the Danube, the Inn, and the Salza: all the rest remained the property of the Elector Palatine, with an entailment in favor of the Duke of Deux-Ponts. The Elector of Saxony received a pecuniary indemnity from the Palatine.²

From this crisis, which well-nigh absorbed Bavaria in the Austrian monarchy, arose, therefore, a new House of Bavaria, more powerful than the former one, since it united the two Bavarian and Palatine electorates. The French government had not played an heroic part in this affair; but it had avoided a very dan-

¹ The Russians had violated this treaty as early as 1777 by interfering by arms in the Crimean affairs.

² See the negotiations in Flassan, t. VII. liv. vii.; Frederick II., *Œuvres posthumes*, t. V.; *Mém. de la guerre de 1778*.

their peril. The old hatred of the Catholic Gaels against the Protestant rulers of English or Scotch origin was no longer alone in question; the Anglo-Irish themselves, indignant at the selfish laws by which England for a century had closed the ports of Ireland for the advantage of English monopoly,¹ threatened to turn against Great Britain the arms which they had just taken up under the pretence of opposing the French invasion; and Ireland already, after the example of America, refused to receive English products. England seemed on the verge of ruin.

The real power of the combined armies did not, however, wholly correspond to the appearance. The incapacity of the Spanish sailors, who remained strangers to the recent progress in naval tactics, greatly diminished the usefulness of their coöperation.² On the other hand, the scurvy, that cruel malady which the improvement in hygiene and a rigorous cleanliness, copied somewhat tardily from the English, have now almost banished from our marine, was raging among the French fleet. One vessel alone, the *Ville-de-Paris*, lost two hundred and eighty men! D'Orvilliers saw his only son expire in his arms. His patriotism and pious resignation gave him strength to continue the campaign. August 7, the allied fleets came in sight of Ushant. They did not find there the promised supply-ships. They steered towards the English coast, but, thwarted by the winds, did not see Lizard Point until the 14th.

Here D'Orvilliers received intelligence by a frigate that the plan of an attack on Portsmouth was abandoned, and that the descent was to be effected at Falmouth, at the extremity of Cornwall; an absurd change, as the port and roadstead of Falmouth were equally bad, and incapable of sheltering a fleet. D'Orvilliers, nevertheless, strove at first to overtake the enemy's fleet; but the English admiral Hardy had taken refuge in the roadstead of Plymouth, and nothing could be captured but a sixty-four gunship, a slow sailer (August 17). The east winds forced the combined fleet from the Channel. The English naval army appeared a second time near the Scilly Isles, but only to flee at once at full

¹ Not only were the Irish almost entirely excluded from commerce with the English colonies, but the exportation of their natural products or most important manufactures was interdicted them! The Irish emigrated in great numbers to America: there were many of them in Washington's army. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 84.

² If the Spaniards lacked knowledge, they did not lack courage. They were justly proud of a battle fought off Cadiz, in which three Spanish frigates took three English frigates by boarding. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 237.

sail. The Franco-Spanish fleet fell back anew on Ushant. Instead of the supply-ships which it had hoped to meet there, it found only an order to return to Brest (September 13).

When means for revictualling the fleet were finally obtained, it was too late again to put to sea. This would not have been the case with the attempt to embark the land forces.

This prodigious display of forces had ended only in humiliating England, by carrying hostile flags into her waters, without her daring to answer the challenge; but no positive result had been obtained, not even that of intercepting the English merchant fleets.¹ The public, unenlightened as to the facts, held the admiral responsible for the incapacity of the minister of the marine. "D'Orvilliers, overwhelmed by his paternal grief much more than by the injustice of men, abandoned the service, and went to end his days far from the world."² This skilful tactician had needed nothing but more favorable opportunities and a more intelligent ministerial direction to take rank among our greatest mariners.

England, escaped from the threats of invasion, averted part of her dangers by finally rendering justice to Ireland, at least in

¹ La Fayette had proposed, immediately upon his arrival, to go to subject the rich cities of Liverpool, Bristol, etc., which were almost defenceless, to ransom. "The economy and timidity of the ministers," he says, "caused the failure of this bold stroke." The great seaport-town of Portsmouth was not better defended, and might certainly have been destroyed. — *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. p. 340.

² L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 463; *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. pp. 197-213, 223-229. Shortly after the return of the fleet, one of the most heroic single engagements ever recorded in maritime annals took place at the entrance of the Channel. The conflict between the two frigates, the *Surveillante* and the *Québec* (October 6, 1779), was a duel of giants. The terrible and touching story should be read in the *Histoire maritime* of Léon Guérin, t. II. p. 465, *et seq.* The forces, valor, and ability were equal. Fortune decided in favor of the French. The English frigate sunk in flames with its intrepid commander, Farmer. The shattered remnants of the crew were picked up and treated like brothers by the French, whose own ship was filled to overflowing with dead and wounded, and was stripped of all its masts. The return of the *Surveillante* to Brest was at once a triumph and a funeral procession. Her captain, De Couëdic, whose courage and humanity had been sublime, died three months afterwards of his wounds. The English were sent home free, as not having surrendered. The English did not afterwards show this magnanimity to the wrecks of the heroic crew of the *Vengeur*. The French privateers, who, by virtue of an ordinance rendered under Choiseul's ministry in 1765, now had the right to carry the white flag, like the royal navy, signalized themselves by numerous exploits during the campaign of 1779. A fellow-countryman of Jean Bart, Royer, a native of Dunkirk, above all rendered himself terrible to the English navy, and took an enormous quantity of prizes. The French privateers, fitted out as actual frigates, swept away before them the little English privateers. — See *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 234, *et seq.*

commercial matters, and removing the prohibitions of exportation and of trade with the colonies (December, 1779).

The campaign had been more fruitful in the West Indies than in Europe. June 16, a small squadron, sent from Martinique by D'Estaing, had landed three or four hundred soldiers or volunteers on the British island of St. Vincent. The garrison and militia of the island were greatly superior in numbers to the assailants; but the Caribs of St. Vincent, the last relics of the primitive population of the West Indies, who remembered having been cruelly oppressed by the English and protected by the French, hastened to join the besiegers; and the English capitulated. D'Estaing then repaired to the Island of Grenada with all his fleet, which had been increased by reinforcements to twenty-five ships of from fifty to eighty guns. He landed in person with thirteen hundred soldiers, without artillery (July 2); and, on the night of July 3-4, carried by assault the height of L'Hôpital, an abrupt and strongly intrenched position, which commanded the town and the other forts of Grenada. It was a retaliation for St. Lucia. The governor surrendered at discretion. Two days after, the English fleet of Admiral Byron, twenty-one ships of the line strong, appeared in sight of Grenada, which it came too late to succor. Had the English flag been left on the forts of Grenada, the fleet would have posted itself between the fire of the forts and that of our vessels. Unhappily, this strategem was neglected; and the English fleet, which might have been destroyed, was only repulsed with some loss. A ship of sixty guns, belonging to Beaumarchais, signalized itself among the vessels of the royal navy. The *Fier-Rodrigue* had been fitted out for the purpose of convoying the merchant-men despatched to America by its owner. The fact is curious enough to deserve mention in history.¹

After these conquests, which secured to the French a decided superiority in the West Indies, D'Estaing returned to succor the allies of France, and went to join the Carolinians in an attack on Savannah, the capital of Georgia, which had been taken by the British during the preceding winter. The British detachments scattered over Georgia succeeded in throwing themselves into the place, which was obstinately defended. The besieged, reinforced by many of the slaves, almost equalled the besiegers in numbers. D'Estaing, impatient at the delay of operations, attempted to storm the enemy's ramparts. The assault was repulsed with the loss of a thousand of the Franco-Americans. The latter retired in good order. D'Estaing, in the foremost rank on all occasions,

¹ Loménie; *Beaumarchais, sa vie et son temps*.

was twice wounded. Among the dead was found the brave Casimir Pulaski, the leader of a small legion which was the first model of the celebrated Polish Legions of the Republic and the Empire (September-October). The French reëmbarked; and their fleet, which had suffered from several gales, separated into three squadrons, one of which returned to Europe with D'Estaing.

The Savannah expedition, despite its want of success, was indirectly productive of an advantageous result. The English, upon the arrival of the French on the coasts of the United States, believing New York menaced, in order to concentrate their forces at this city, had abandoned the position at Rhode Island which it had been vainly attempted to wrest from them the year before. D'Estaing had besides captured from them a fifty-gun ship and two frigates.

The year 1779 terminated, in the American waters, by an encounter very glorious to our arms. December 18, Commodore la Motte-Piquet, with three ships, bravely engaged fourteen British ships in defence of a merchant flotilla, one-half of which he saved; then extricated his three vessels from the midst of the enemy, and returned to the roadstead of Fort Royal.

The year 1779 had been a mournful one for England. She had suspended her internal discords under the influence of a strong national feeling; she had exhausted her resources in gigantic expenditures; she had cast £20,000,000 into the gulf of the war; yet she found herself greatly inferior in forces to the allies. Threatened at home, she had experienced perceptible losses in her distant possessions, which seemed to presage others still more fatal. She seemed gliding down the declivity of ruin. Gloomy tidings arrived even from India, in which the French had no part: an English army had capitulated to the Mahrattas, and Hyder Ali was preparing to take up arms anew. On the continent of America, the Spaniards had just seized the offensive with unforeseen activity and vigor. From Western Louisiana, that French province abandoned to Spain by the treaty of 1763, a body of troops had marched upon Eastern Louisiana, called New Florida by the English, its existing possessors. Invaded in the autumn of 1779, the entire province¹ fell into the hands of the Spanish before the spring of 1781, without the English, obliged to face their enemies at so many points at once, having been able to carry any aid thither.

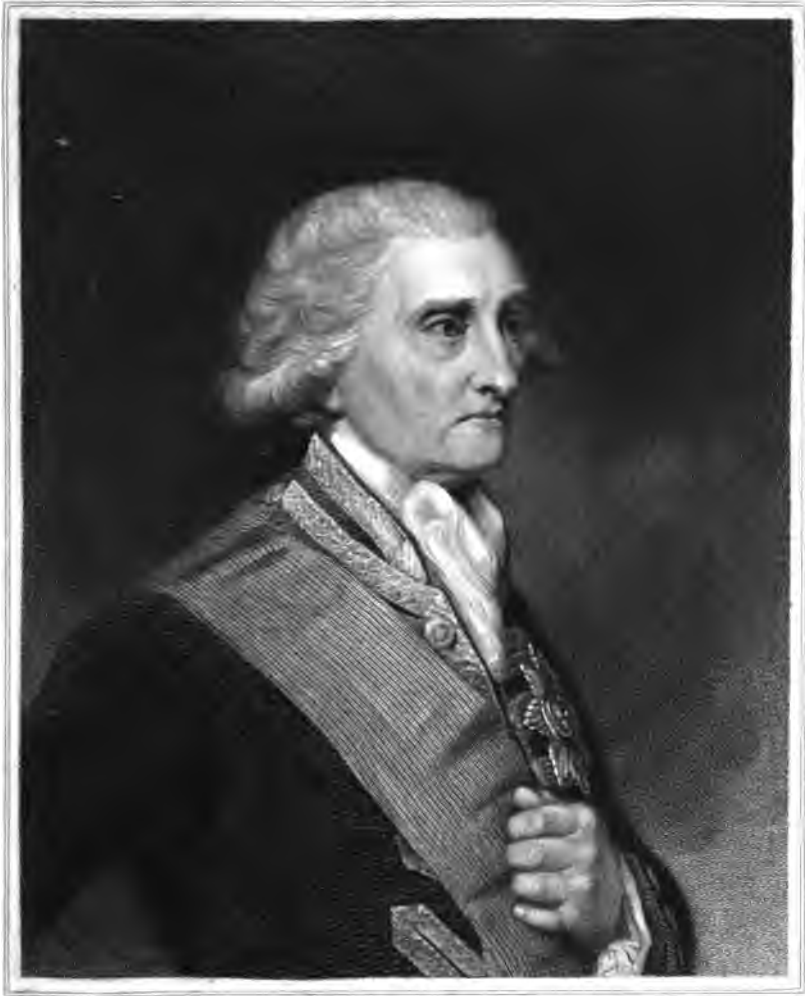
England had reasons for consolation in the beginning of 1780.

¹ Bâton-Rouge, Mobile, Pensacola, etc.

An English mariner of very great talent, but of irregular habits, Admiral Rodney, was detained in France for debts contracted prior to the war. He said one day, in the presence of the Marshal de Biron, that "if he were free, and at the head of the British navy, he would soon destroy the fleets of France and Spain." — "Try, sir," replied the marshal; "you are free!" and paid his debts. Rodney, restored to England by this chivalrous impulse which was to cost us dear, immediately received the command of twenty-two ships of the line designed to succor Gibraltar, which the Spaniards were closely investing, and afterwards to dispute the West Indies with us. He succeeded completely in the first part of his mission, captured a Spanish merchant-man with its escort, overpowered on the coast of Andalusia a weak Spanish squadron taking or destroying six ships of the line, revictualled Gibraltar, and set out triumphantly for the West Indies (January–February, 1780). One of his lieutenants captured a French ship of sixty-four guns which was escorting a convoy. We also lost this year, in the European seas, a sixty-gun ship and several frigates; among others, the celebrated *Belle Poule*, which defended itself five hours with its twenty-six guns against a ship of sixty-four.

These reverses, none of which was without glory, since none of the vessels lost had yielded except to superior forces, were compensated for by very important prizes. Among others, an Irish privateer in the service of France is cited, which captured more than forty trading-vessels in a single cruise. A convoy of sixty-two vessels, the cargoes of which were worth £1,500,000, and which were manned by three thousand sailors, fell into the power of a Franco-Spanish fleet near Cape St. Vincent (August 9). Several frigates and transports were taken from the English. In one of these encounters, our marine lost the brave privateer Royer, who was mortally wounded while forcing a small English squadron, superior to his own, to retreat.

Rodney, during the interval, found himself slow to realize his threats. After defeating the Spaniards in Europe, he was confronted by the French in the West Indies. D'Estaing no longer commanded them. Beloved by the soldiers and sailors, and very popular with the nation at large, this admiral was the object of the hostility of the marine corps, the most jealous and intractable of all bodies, who regarded him as an intruder because he had not come from the marine guards, and because he had first served in the army. Intrigue succeeded in setting him aside this year



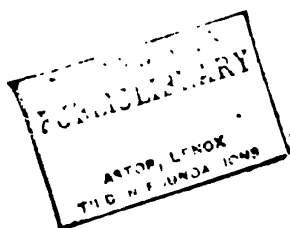
Engraved by E. G. Green

MR. DOONEY

*From a Picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds
in his Majesty's Collection at St. James's Palace*

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge

Printed by J. G. & Co., Charles Rowker, Pall Mall East



from the most active and brilliant command, — that of America. He was at least replaced by a sailor worthy to succeed him, the Lieutenant-General Count de Guichen. Rodney and Guichen encountered each other, April 17, in the waters of Dominica. The French had twenty-four ships, the English twenty-one.¹ After admirable manœuvres on both sides, Rodney, who had the weather-gauge, ceased firing, and retired during the night, after having been obliged to quit his disabled flag-ship. He went to St. Lucia to repair his fleet, which had suffered more than the French fleet; and speedily returned to the charge. May 15, a second indecisive action took place between Martinique and St. Lucia. On the 19th, the English vanguard, seven ships strong, found itself engaged with the rearguard and the centre of the French. The wind suddenly falling, the main body of the English fleet was long unable to succor its vanguard, which it finally released, but so much shattered, that, during the night, the mutilated vessels were towed to St. Lucia. A seventy-four-gun ship was sunk. The rest of the fleet retired to Barbadoes. The French admiral paid dearly for his glory: his son, a lieutenant of the navy, was among the victims of this third action.

Rodney, unsuccessful in his attacks on the French fleet, succeeded no better in intercepting a Spanish squadron of twelve ships, which was bringing to the islands a large convoy of troops and merchandise. The admirals De Guichen and Solano effected their junction without difficulty (June 19). Jamaica and the other British islands were in terror; but the want of harmony of the two admirals, the delays and hesitation of the Spaniards, and, above all, a terrible epidemic which raged among their crews and regiments, and which they communicated to the French, paralyzed the combined fleet. These great forces, and this campaign, so well begun, resulted in nothing.² Towards autumn, De Guichen, instead of repairing to the United States, where he was expected, returned, according to his instructions, to escort in person to the waters of Cadiz the merchant fleet of the West Indies, which D'Estaing, with the Franco-Spanish squadron of Cadiz, then convoyed to France.³

The elements were more terrible enemies than men, this year,

¹ Vessels of fifty guns began no longer to be counted as ships of the line. Each of the two fleets had but one of these vessels.

² The Spanish admiral, Solano, was more fortunate in the ensuing spring: it was he who, in May, 1781, seconded by the French of San Domingo, determined the conquest of Pensacola and all Western Florida.

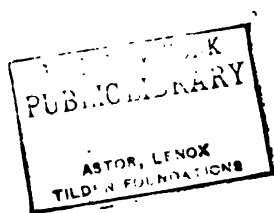
³ L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime*, t. II. p. 493; *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. pp. 420, 475-481; *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, t. III. pp. 275-282, 305-306.

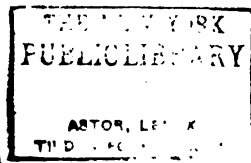
to the English West-India colonies. Jamaica had been cruelly ravaged by a hurricano, February 23: it experienced a second one, of extreme violence, at the beginning of October. On the 10th of the same month, a tempest of unheard-of fury, a true convulsion of Nature, laid waste the rich and beautiful Island of Barbadoes from one end to the other; buried several thousand of the inhabitants under the ruins of their dwellings; devastated St. Lucia in the same manner; wrecked numerous vessels, among which were one large ship and two frigates; and disabled many other vessels of war. The French islands also experienced great losses, but much less than those of the English, which were aggravated by the destruction of a part of the merchant fleet of Jamaica, which was at sea during these terrible storms.

During the sterile conflicts in the West Indies, the position of England had improved in the United States. An expedition despatched from New York had taken Charleston, the capital of South Carolina, and invaded the whole of this province (April-May, 1780). General Gates, the conqueror of Burgoyne, was defeated in attempting to recover it (August). The whole South appeared in great danger. The United States were exhausted in turn, and the aid of France had never been so necessary to them. They welcomed; therefore, with as much joy as gratitude, their faithful friend La Fayette, who, seeing no prospect of a descent on England during the year, rejoined Washington, this time with the permission of the cabinet of Versailles, and announced the arrival of a body of French troops, with a convoy of arms and equipments for the Americans. Five thousand French soldiers landed in fact at Rhode Island, July 12, under the command of a distinguished general, Count de Rochambeau, who had been ordered to recognize Washington, invested with the rank of lieutenant-general in the French army, as commander-in-chief. They were escorted only by a small squadron of seven ships of the line, and the English kept the maritime superiority in the United States; but the junction of the French corps with the Americans of Washington and La Fayette at least compelled the enemy to concentrate his principal land and naval forces for the protection of New York and the observation of Rhode Island. The offensive operations of the other English army against the Southern provinces were slackened. The commanding general, Clinton, was unable to send sufficient forces to Lord Cornwallis, the conqueror of Charleston; and the American cause began to improve in the South. America, and La Fayette, its usual interpreter, conjured the



Portrait of
A. DUMAS







Ségur (Philippe Henri, Marquis de)
1731-1808. Maréchal de France, 1801.

French government to complete its work by sending to the United States an adequate naval force. The whole advantage in this coast warfare belonged to the one of the two adversaries that could move his troops more rapidly by sea wherever he pleased.

These entreaties, which could only be granted for the next campaign, were received by new ministers. Sartine had been on bad terms with Necker, as formerly with Turgot, but for very different reasons. If he had the merit of actively urging forward the building of vessels for the navy,¹ by way of compensation, not only did he understand nothing of war, but his administration was a prey to disorder. He had exceeded by seventeen millions, in 1780, the prodigious appropriation made to the marine (one hundred and twenty-six millions); notwithstanding which, the sailors were not paid, and the different branches of the service were continually delayed, as had been only too well experienced on the most important occasions. Necker, strong in the support of public opinion, and the eulogies which he received even in the English parliament, where the Opposition made use of his name to flagellate the ministers of George III., — Necker declared that it was necessary to choose between his resignation and the removal of Sartine. Maurepas, who had become very jealous of the director of finance, would have gladly sacrificed him, but dared not. Sartine was dismissed. Maurepas proposed to Necker to place both the marine and the finances in his hands, *after the example of Colbert*. He hoped to crush him beneath the weight of this double ministry. Necker escaped the snare, and baffled Maurepas in his turn. In accordance with the Queen, he took advantage of a fit of the gout, which kept the aged minister for some days in bed, to procure the appointment of a protégé of Marie-Antoinette, the Marquis de Castries (October 14, 1780). This time, the Queen's confidence was honorably placed. M. de Castries was too little acquainted with the marine; but at least he was a man of judgment and courage, and was greatly esteemed for his conduct in the Seven-Years' War.

Two months after, the minister of war disappeared in turn. The incapable courtier who had succeeded Saint-Germain, the Prince de Montbarrei, was replaced by the Marquis de Ségur (December, 1780), — another protégé of the Queen, and a new repulse for Maurepas. Ségur, a brave officer and an intelligent

¹ Fifteen ships of the line had been launched within two years, and the campaign of 1780 had been opened with seventy-nine ships. The English boasted of having one hundred and two. — L. Guérin, t. II. p. 489; *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 355.

administrator, possessed the qualities necessary to aid Castries in vigorously pushing operations: he was even more especially adapted to the department of war than was Castries to that of the marine.

France, therefore, was strengthening her means of action, and putting herself in a position to make a better use of them. England had relapsed into discord. The Opposition had begun to clamor anew after the reverses of 1779, and had introduced into the House of Commons formidable numbers of petitions against the influence of the crown and the parliamentary corruption. The language of the orators and the petitioners was so threatening, that the refusal of the taxes and civil war seemed imminent. The House of Commons was terrified. The Opposition gained the majority for a moment: it lost it again, however; and the minister North maintained his position (April, 1780). Violent disturbances broke out, meanwhile, from another cause. Before the commercial concessions to Ireland, important concessions had been granted to the Catholics in 1778. The ineligibility to inherit property,¹ and to acquire real estate, imposed on them, had been removed; and the penalty of perpetual imprisonment decreed against their priests and monks had been abrogated, on condition of swearing fidelity to the reigning house, and abjuring the belief in the power of the Pope in temporal matters. The hatred and terror of Papistry subsisted in all their bitterness among the Scotch Presbyterians. These violent people raised an outcry of treason, and replied to the act of parliament by riots, and by sacking the houses of the Catholics at Edinburgh and Glasgow. Two great associations were formed in Scotland, then in England, *to oppose the re-establishment of Papistry*; both of which chose for their president Lord George Gordon, a personage of an enthusiasm carried to madness. June 2, 1780, an immense crowd, by the invitation of Lord George Gordon, repaired to Westminster for the purpose of enforcing on the parliament the revocation of the concessions made to the Catholics. Many of the members of both houses were insulted and maltreated on their way to Westminster. The houses, nevertheless, refused to deliberate under the pressure of the mob; and the multitude hesitated to violate the sanctuary of the legislature. It was not appeased, however; and, for several days, the disorders continued to increase. The mob sacked and burned, first the chapels of the Catholics which had been tol-

¹ By an act of the reign of William III., a Catholic heir was set aside when the next of kin after him was of the *Established Church*.

erated, then their houses, then the houses of several high functionaries and members of the parliament who had proposed or supported the measures of tolerance : the prisons were forced ; and the skies of the great city glowed nightly with the flames of conflagrations. The brutal passions of the nameless populace that filled the old quarters of London were excited to the highest pitch, and men began to destroy for the sake of destruction or of pillage. The Bank was seriously threatened. The government at last determined to summon troops to London. The sedition did not hold out against the musketry, and was stifled in the blood of several hundred of the rioters. The leaders of the Opposition, Fox, Burke, and even the demagogue Wilkes, had energetically declared themselves opposed to the riot, and in favor of tolerance. This storm, by terrifying the middle classes, effected a diversion from the legal dissensions of the parliament, and strengthened the ministry for some time. It again obtained the majority in a new parliament, and was able, despite the fatigue and suffering of England, to dispose of sums for 1781 greatly exceeding those which any English administration had ever had in its hands. The budget of war amounted to £25,000,000.¹

The war had been less disadvantageous to the English in 1780 than in the preceding year ; but every thing announced that unheard-of efforts would be required to avoid being overpowered in the next campaign. Their diplomacy had not been happy. Their selfish pride, and their contempt for the rights of others, were punished by absolute isolation ; while France found everywhere either allies or a friendly neutrality. As early as July 26, 1778, almost at the opening of hostilities, the French government had issued a maritime regulation in favor of the rights of neutrals, by which our ship-owners were forbidden to stop neutral vessels, even when coming from the enemy's ports or on their way thither, except those which were carrying assistance to places blockaded or besieged, or were laden with articles contraband of war. The latter merchandise was to be confiscated ; but the ship stopped was to experience the same fate only if the contraband articles formed three-fourths of her lading, or if she had on board either a supercargo, clerk, or other officer of the enemy, or a crew, more than one-third of which was formed of the enemy's subjects. The neutrals were dissatisfied with the last restrictions ; but the harsh measures of England soon made them forget this light grievance. The English, treading

¹ *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 521.

under foot the principle laid down in their treaties with Holland as in the treaties of Utrecht, to wit, that the flag covers the merchandise, except what is contraband of war, treated as contraband every kind of merchandise which could be of service to the marine, and stopped on the ocean all neutral vessels freighted for France as trafficking with blockaded places, *since all the French ports were naturally blockaded by the ports of England.*

The irritation against them became general. Denmark complained, and obtained only a very inadequate reparation. The King of Sweden did more than complain: he armed himself, and enforced his demands by this energetic demonstration (April, 1779). Holland complained like Denmark, and armed herself like Sweden; but her words and acts only procured her new affronts. England relied on the criminal connivance of the executive power, — that degenerate Nassau who sold his country in exchange for the support given him by the cabinet of St. James against the friends of liberty. Not only did she refuse to respect the neutrality of Holland, but she imperiously summoned the United Provinces to renounce this neutrality, and to furnish her the assistance stipulated by the ancient treaties of alliance (July–November, 1779). France not less peremptorily claimed the full observance of the neutrality from which the United Provinces had derogated by admitting the English principle which entitled contraband of war the naval munitions destined for France. The restrictive measures adopted by way of reprisal against Dutch commerce by the French government proved effective: the city of Amsterdam, then the greater part of the cities of Holland, then part of those of the other United Provinces, successively declared themselves in favor of full neutrality and of the true principles of maritime law. The republican party, revived and supported with as much ability as energy by the French ambassador, La Vauguyon, who bore little resemblance to his father, the baleful governor of Louis XVI., caused the merchant-men to be conveyed by armed escorts, despite the faction of the stadtholder.¹ December 31, 1779, a convoy escorted by Dutch ships of war was stopped in the Channel by an English squadron. The Dutch commodore fired on the aggressors, to prove their violence and his resistance; then, too inferior to be able to give battle, struck

¹ Flassan remarks, as a rare event in diplomatic history, that “La Vauguyon did not give the most trifling sum of money to gain over or corrupt any one, and won the ascendancy for the French party by means of persuasion alone.” — Flassan, t. VII. p. 289.

his flag, and followed to Spithead his trading-vessels, carried off by the English. The merchant-men were declared a lawful prize by the English admiralty. England, no longer hoping for the alliance of Holland, preferred her enmity to her neutrality. This wealthy and feeble adversary offered to British cupidity flourishing colonies to pillage, and an enormous amount of interest to repudiate.¹

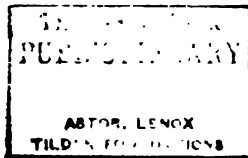
In default of Holland, the cabinet of St. James hoped, at this moment, at length to gain a powerful ally, — Russia, — who carried on scarcely any commerce with France, but a very extensive one with England; and who seemed, moreover, disposed to sacrifice every thing to the interests of her ambition in the East. Catharine II. had insinuated to the English government, that, if it would consent to unite with her against the Ottoman empire, she would accept the English alliance under the form of an armed mediation of Russia in the war between England and her colonies, France, and Spain. Catharine was divided between two influences, — that of the favorite Potemkin, who inclined towards England; and that of the prime minister Panin, attached to the great Frederick, and ill disposed towards the English. When the English cabinet officially addressed to the Czarina the proposals which she herself had instigated, Panin found means of protracting the affair. During the interval, the Spaniards having seized two Russian vessels in the Mediterranean which were trafficking with the English, Catharine demanded satisfaction from Spain, and armed fifteen ships of the line to support her demand. The English believed every thing won; when Panin, with marvellous ability, persuaded the Czarina to seize the opportunity to establish the system of true maritime rights in Europe, and to place herself with éclat at the head of the neutral powers. Catharine cared very little for *rights*; but she willingly lent herself to every opportunity of making a display. She permitted Panin to send to the belligerent powers and to the courts of Sweden and Denmark a declaration, in which Russia laid down the principles, first, that neutral vessels have a right to sail from port to port, and along the coasts of nations at war; secondly, that property belonging to the subjects of belligerent powers should be respected on neutral vessels; thirdly, that no articles are contraband except arms, equipments, and munitions of war; fourthly, that no ports are blockaded except those before which a naval

¹ The Dutch had, as we have already said, an immense amount of capital invested in England.

tions. It was very evident that Sartine was no longer in the ministry. The plan of the campaign had been perfectly laid, and the resources were ready in time. As early as the month of March, a first fleet quitted Brest for the West Indies. We shall speedily recur to the events to which it lent a decisive coöperation. About the end of June, a second squadron of eighteen ships of the line, commanded by De Guichen, set sail from Brest for Cadiz to rally the Spanish fleet of Cordova, which had not succeeded in preventing the English from revictualling Gibraltar, reduced to the last extremity in April, without striking a blow. July 21, the combined fleet, fifty ships of the line strong, quitted the roadstead of Cadiz simultaneously with a large convoy carrying ten thousand Spanish troops, commanded by a French general, the Duke de Crillon, under the escort of two ships of the line and some other vessels. The convoy crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and, thwarted for some time by the winds, at length landed the troops, August 21, upon the shore of Minorca. The English governor, who had only three thousand men at his disposal, did not even attempt to defend either the city and harbor of Mahon, or the other places of the island, but permitted a hundred and sixty cannon, and a great number of vessels and rich magazines, to fall into the hands of the assailants without striking a blow; and hastened to shut himself up in Fort St. Philip, which he obstinately defended against the Spanish army, reënforced successively from Barcelona and Toulon.

Meanwhile, the great fleet, after protecting the entrance of the convoy into the Mediterranean, had returned to the Channel. This time, the Spaniard, Cordova, had the chief command. The English admiral, Darby, who was cruising with twenty-one ships, narrowly escaped falling among this formidable armament, and barely had time to take refuge in the roadstead of Torbay. The French admiral, Guichen, and the major-general of the Spanish fleet, Massaredo, eagerly urged Cordova to consent to an attack. The narrows which led into the roadstead presented some peril; but the anchorage of Torbay was protected by no fortifications on the land side. The old admiral, worn out by age, refused; and the council of war, in which the Spaniards were in the majority, decided in the same manner.¹ Soon after, disease and bad weather compelled the combined fleet to dissolve. The French set sail for Brest as early as September 11; and the

¹ Unpublished Memoirs of Admiral Willaumez, cited by Captain Bouet-Willaumez of the navy, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, April 1, 1852.





Engraved by R. Robinson

SAMUEL, FIRST VISCOUNT HOOD.

OB. 1816.

FROM THE ORIGINAL OF SIR J. REYNOLDS, IN THE COLLECTION OF

THE RIGHT HON^{BLE} THE VISCOUNTESS BRIDPORT.

London: Published 1826, 1834 by Harding & Lepard, Pall Mall East.

Spaniards returned to Cadiz. This was the complete renunciation of those heterogeneous unions which combined great masses of men to no purpose.

The kind of fatality which rested upon our fleet of the Channel had just rendered its great superiority for the third time useless. The news from America indemnified France. This year, the fate of the war was at length decided in the United States.

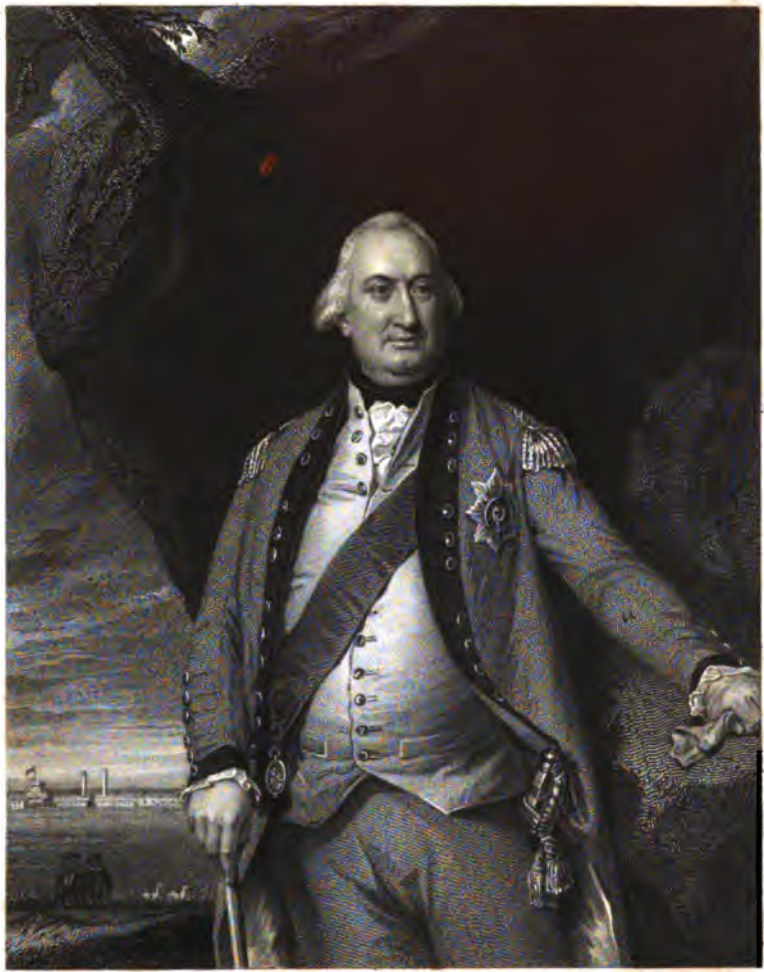
As early as March 24, a fleet of twenty-one ships of the line set out from Brest for Martinique, escorting a large convoy; so well equipped, that it was enabled to make the voyage in thirty-six days. Public opinion would have gladly replaced D'Estaing at the head of this fine armament; but the command was given to Lieutenant-General de Grasse. He was a brave and devoted officer: events would show whether his talents corresponded to so great a task. There was no reason immediately to repent of the choice. Fortune favored our arms. Admiral Hood vainly attempted, with eighteen ships, to close the bay of Fort Royal to De Grasse, who brought his convoy into the bay, and reënforced himself with four ships formerly blockaded in this roadstead (April 28-29). Admiral Hood, after a battle valiantly sustained with inferior forces, escaped, owing to the skilfulness of his manœuvring, and retired to the Island of Antigua, where Rodney, his commander-in-chief, rejoined him with three ships from St. Eustatius. The French fleet, letting Hood go, returned to make a feigned attack on St. Lucia (May 9-13). Meanwhile, a small squadron landed a body of French troops on Tobago, the southernmost of the Windward Islands. A few days after, the whole fleet moved in the same direction with new land forces. The English garrison of Tobago capitulated June 2. Rodney had been unable to give it any aid.

In the beginning of July, Admiral de Grasse set sail from Martinique for French Cape in San Domingo; took there three thousand land forces and some money; successfully crossed the double channel of Bahama, which fleets rarely enter; and anchored, August 30, at the entrance of the Chesapeake, — that immense bay, which stretches for eighty leagues into the heart of the United States.

He was expected there with impatience. The military operations had been very active on the American continent since the beginning of the year. The English, reënforced from Europe, had transported a body of troops from New York by sea to the James River in Virginia. This attack, directed against the very heart

of America, was of much greater importance than the invasion of Georgia or South Carolina. The possession of Virginia became the great object of the war. La Fayette had the honor of being commissioned to defend Virginia. The American general Greene resumed the offensive in the interior, in the direction of the Carolinas. The English general of the South, Lord Cornwallis, leaving his subaltern generals to dispute the ground with Greene, crossed North Carolina, and rejoined the detachment from New York in Virginia with the main body of his troops. He left a reserve corps with a flotilla at Portsmouth, at the lower part of the James River, and moved forward at the head of five thousand choice troops. La Fayette, who had only three thousand, the greater part militia, found himself in great peril (May, 1781). While, in old Europe, hundreds of thousands of soldiers had recently been seen slaughtering each other, without succeeding in changing the boundaries of a province, these handfuls of men in America were deciding the destinies of an infant world!

La Fayette, with a prudence and ability very remarkable in a general of twenty-four, fell back step by step, without suffering himself to be weakened, to the northern extremity of Virginia, in order to preserve his communications with Pennsylvania. Reënforced by the Pennsylvanians, he ceased to recede; saved the military magazines of the Southern States by a rapid march; and, become almost equal to the enemy in numbers, had the art to cause himself to be believed greatly superior in forces. Cornwallis, in turn, fell back towards the James River, and did not stop until he had rejoined his reserve corps at the lower part and the south of this large stream. La Fayette was not in a condition to attack him. Cornwallis, reassured, moved back to the north of the James River, and took horse on the York River, near the outlet of this stream into Chesapeake Bay. La Fayette posted himself on the York River, above the enemy, cut off the communications of Cornwallis with the Carolinas, and threatened Portsmouth, where the English reserve had remained. This reserve abandoned Portsmouth, and joined Cornwallis at Yorktown (July-August). Had La Fayette himself directed the enemy's army, he would not have operated differently. The positions of Yorktown and Gloucester, excellent for an army that was the master of the sea, became a veritable snare to the party that ceased to possess the maritime superiority. August 30, as we have said, the French fleet arrived to close Chesapeake Bay, blockade the



Engraved by W. Hall

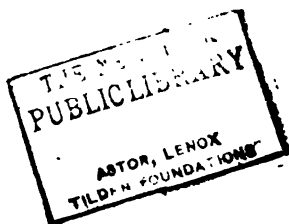
CHARLES, MARQUIS CORNWALLIS.

OB. 1805.

FROM THE ORIGINAL OF COPLEY, IN

THE GUILDHALL, LONDON.

London Published & Sold by Baskins & Tupper Pall Mall East



James and York Rivers, and land three thousand French, who joined La Fayette.¹

September 5, an English fleet was signalled: it was the squadron from New York under Admiral Graves, reënforced by a part of the West-India fleet under the command of Hood. De Grasse, without waiting for a large number of his sailors who were engaged in landing the troops, went to meet the English with twenty-four ships of the line against twenty. Admiral Graves, perceiving the force of the French, took advantage of the wind to avoid a general action; but his vanguard, commanded by Hood, was greatly injured by the French vanguard, which was led by the illustrious navigator Bougainville, and which bore the brunt of the battle. Night permitted Graves to rally and to repair his position. He did not attempt to renew the battle, but put out to sea; while De Grasse returned to his blockade, capturing on his way two English frigates which were attempting to effect an entrance into York River. De Grasse found off Cape Henry, at the entrance of Chesapeake Bay, the French squadron from Rhode Island, which the Count de Barras,² although his senior, came spontaneously to place under his command, with an abnegation too rare among military leaders. De Grasse thus had thirty-eight ships of the line under his flag,—a force which forbade the enemy all hope of maritime assistance.

The commander of the squadron, Barras, had brought siege artillery and munitions. De Grasse, who declared himself obliged to set out again for the West Indies, urged La Fayette to attack the enemy at once. The youthful general had the wisdom to refuse, and the virtue to prefer to his own glory the interest of the cause and the lives of his soldiers. He was little superior in numbers to a well-intrenched enemy; and he knew that Washington and Rochambeau, after feigning to menace New York in order to prevent Clinton from sending reënforcements to Virginia, were on their way to him by forced marches, and that they had already reached the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. De Grasse consented to prolong his stay; sent his transports to convey thither the six thousand soldiers brought by the American commander-in-chief; and, September 28, eight thousand Americans and as many French

¹ The French government had accompanied this military aid with important pecuniary assistance. Besides its direct loans to the Americans, it had been security for, then had taken upon itself, another loan of ten millions which they had endeavored to obtain in Holland.

² The uncle of the member of the convention.

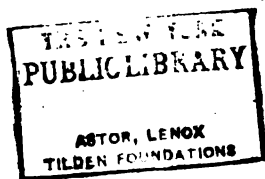
invested the two corps of the little British army in Yorktown and Gloucester, on both banks of the broad York River. The siege works were commenced before Yorktown during the night of October 6-7. On the night of the 14th, two columns, one of American light infantry led by La Fayette, the other of French grenadiers and chasseurs¹ under the command of Major-General Viomesnil, carried with the bayonet two redoubts which covered the left of the enemy's lines. On the 19th, Lord Cornwallis capitulated with respect to Yorktown, Gloucester, and the flotilla, and surrendered himself prisoner of war with seven thousand soldiers and one thousand sailors. Two hundred and fourteen guns and thirty vessels fell into the power of the conquerors. A fifty-gun ship and several other vessels had been burned. The English fleet, increased by reinforcements to twenty-seven ships, reappeared, October 27, off Cape Henry, only to receive intelligence of this disaster, and was too happy itself to escape De Grasse.

A prolonged cry of rejoicing resounded throughout America. Next to God, a whole people saluted France as the author of its deliverance. The independence of the United States was thenceforth assured. "Humanity," wrote La Fayette, "has gained its suit: liberty will nevermore be without an asylum."² Glorious days when France, rejuvenated and purified by the ascendancy of public opinion alone, forced the traditional power which still governed her to employ its sword in the service of justice and reason, — days of spotless glory, which should not be effaced from our memory by the gigantic triumphs of a later age, mingled with fatal errors, and followed by such cruel reverses.

Washington and La Fayette would have gladly completed the victory by retaining Admiral de Grasse to aid them in expelling the English from South Carolina and Georgia. De Grasse believed himself unable to prolong his coöperation, and returned to the West Indies. The fall of the English posts in the South was, however, only a question of time. General Greene had already driven back the enemy from all South Carolina into Charleston, and the progress of the Spaniards in Florida rendered the position of the English completely untenable. The Spaniards, masters of Western Florida, had effected a new landing in Eastern Florida,

¹ They had been taken from that celebrated Auvergne regiment of which Rochambeau had long been colonel, and in the ranks of which D'Assas had met his death. "My children," exclaimed Rochambeau to them at the moment of giving the signal, "do not forget *spotless Auvergne!*" They remembered it. — *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. p. 294.

² *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 50.





M. LE MARQUIS DE BOUILLÉ.

H. 911. 1000

and captured St. Augustine, the capital of this great peninsula (August, 1781). The English garrisons of Savannah and Charleston were about to be shut in between the Spaniards and the Americans, and New York itself could not long be sustained.¹

The capture of part of a convoy of troops and munitions, despatched from Brest to the East and West Indies, was a trifling consolation to the English for the disasters in America (December 12).

France coöperated energetically everywhere with her allies. Holland was in great need of her assistance. The unworthy stadtholder had left the arsenals everywhere empty, and the colonies defenceless; and the republican party, again become preponderant, but not absolute master of the government, was forced to use great efforts to constrain the executive power to restore to the United Provinces a naval force worthy of any respect. The Dutch sailors proved, at the battle of Dogger's-bank, that the blood of De Ruyter and Van Tromp was not frozen in their veins;² but their country was none the less obliged to solicit from the French a vengeance which she could not obtain for herself. The Governor of Martinique, the brave and able Marquis de Bouillé, surprised the Island of St. Eustatius in conditions which called to mind the unhappy attack on the Island of Jersey. He succeeded better than Rullecourt; and four hundred French, separated from their ships, which had put out to sea, and from their companions, who could not assist them, forced eight hundred English to lay down their arms. St. Eustatius and the neighboring islands were restored to Holland, with the remains of the booty of Rodney (November 26). A small French squadron, a few weeks after, expelled the English from Dutch Guiana.

The French almost immediately undertook another conquest on their own account. Admiral de Grasse, who had returned from the Chesapeake to the West Indies, after attempts on Barbadoes which were defeated by contrary winds, landed Bouillé with six thousand men on the Island of St. Christopher, the common cradle of French and English colonization in the West Indies, and which had been left in the possession of the English by the treaty

¹ Concerning this campaign, see *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. I. pp. 266-284, 409-480; *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, t. III. pp. 359-400; *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. pp. 126-152; L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime*, t. II. pp. 499-510; *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. pp. 262-299; *Vie et correspondance de Washington*.

² August 5, 1781, two small English and Dutch squadrons fought in the North Sea the most infuriated battle as yet witnessed in this war, disabling and destroying each other without any decided advantage.

of 1763 (January 11, 1782). The feeble English garrison abandoned the town of Basse-Terre, the capital of the island, and the coast batteries, and took refuge on the fortified height of Brimstone Hill, where the French besieged them. The English fleet of Admiral Hood hastened from Barbadoes to the assistance of St. Christopher. It had only twenty-two ships against thirty. De Grasse determined to profit by his superiority to overpower the enemy. He quitted the roadstead in which he was advantageously posted, and went to meet the English. Hood retreated; drew the French admiral out to sea; then, by a manœuvre of great skill, flanked the French fleet, and posted himself in the same roadstead which De Grasse had just quitted. De Grasse, furious, strove to repair his unskilfulness by temerity: he twice attacked Hood in the excellent position of which the latter had despoiled him. He was twice repulsed; and the English fleet landed a body of troops, which attempted to succor Brimstone Hill (January 25-26). Fortunately, the general of the land forces knew how to repair the error of the admiral. A small detachment from Bouillé's corps defeated the English, and forced them to reëmbark; and this general, entirely separated as he was from the fleet, vigorously continued the siege, and forced the garrison to capitulate before the eyes of Admiral Hood. (February 13). The capitulation comprised the Island of Nevis.

Hood, shut in between the French fleet and the batteries which Bouillé caused to be erected on the heights that commanded the roadstead, would have been lost had he had to deal with another adversary than De Grasse. The latter committed the incredible folly of quitting his anchorage to go in person to the Island of Nevis in search of provisions, instead of sending his frigates thither. Hood, during the night, cut his cables, and escaped. The next morning, he was out of sight!

It was terrible to see our best fleet at the discretion of a man capable of such madness, and who would listen to no counsel. There was reason to fear that Fortune would finally grow weary of aiding us. She still favored us, however; and the Island of Montserrat surrendered after St. Christopher (February 22). Nothing remained in the possession of the English, of all the West Indies, but Jamaica, Antigua, Barbadoes, and St. Lucia.

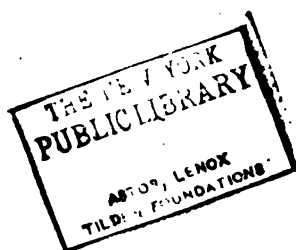
The fall of Fort St. Philip, that powerful citadel of Port Mahon which the English had been unable to revictual, and which its courageous garrison were forced by exhaustion to surrender, February 5, 1782, may be considered, with the capture of St.



J. B. de la Roche sculp.

VUE DU FORT DE BRIMSTONEHILL.

dans l'île de St. Christophe.



Christopher, as the complement of this admirable campaign of 1781. Provence and Languedoc witnessed with the most lively joy the fall of that nest of vultures, from which the British privateers darted unceasingly on every vessel that quitted our southern ports, and made it their prey. The loss of such a post was more to England than the loss of a battle: it was losing one of the most glorious fruits of the treaty of Utrecht.

Important events, to which we shall have occasion to revert, transpired about the same time in the East Indies, where the French flag had reappeared with glory. Everywhere abroad, the presages were favorable. Unhappily, this was no longer the case at home. While the nation showed its courage and power completely revived, its feeble monarch, incapable of sustaining and profiting by such a change of fortune, had just repeated the irreparable weakness of 1776, and had sacrificed Necker as he had sacrificed Turgot, and to the same enemies (May 19, 1781). In order not to interrupt the narrative of the American War, we will postpone the exposition of the principal administrative acts of Necker, as well as of the circumstances which caused his fall, and the substitution for him of a lawyer devoid of financial consistency, Joli de Fleuri. We will only remark, that, though his fall had a great effect on public opinion in France and everywhere, it was productive of no immediate material results: the funds had been fully secured for 1781, and even in part for 1782, by the minister who had found it possible to borrow five hundred millions in four years on relatively moderate conditions. His successor completed the resources of 1782 by the old expedients of routine ministers, the reëstablishment of abolished offices, the increase of taxes and duties, etc.

France had lost the minister, who, after opposing the war, had succeeded in finding the means of conducting it. England, a few months later, expelled the minister who had desired the war, and had carried it on badly. Ireland, suspecting the intention of withdrawing the concessions which she had obtained, resumed the most menacing attitude, without distinction between Protestants and Catholics, and began to refuse all supremacy to the parliament of Great Britain over the Irish parliament. The Irish agitation, but, above all, the fall of Minorca and St. Christopher, determined the fall of Lord North, already greatly shaken by the disaster at Yorktown. The House of Commons passed a resolution which implied the renunciation of the attempt to reconquer the *revolted provinces*, and the concentration of the efforts of

England against her European enemies. Great Britain resigned herself to that dismemberment of the British empire, the thought of which had killed Lord Chatham. Lord North offered his resignation after twelve years of the most unfortunate ministry that England had long experienced (March, 1782). The parliament had voted for the war more than £100,000,000 from 1775 to 1782.¹ At the close of 1781, England had lost eighty-two ships of war; her enemies, altogether, ninety-four. She had ninety ships of the line; the Franco-Spaniards, one hundred and thirty-six, without counting the Dutch. The parliament had just voted one hundred thousand sailors for 1782.

The new ministry, in which figured all the important names of the Opposition, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Lord Shelburne, the brothers Howe, Admiral Keppel, Lord Richmond, etc., all, except that young inheritor of the name of Pitt, who was so soon and so long to govern England,—the new ministry, faithful to its origin, pacified Ireland by recognizing the independence of the Irish parliament; a brilliant concession, which the younger Pitt would one day cause to be revoked amidst seas of blood. It attempted at the same time to treat with the United States and Holland, in order to be forced to confront only the ancient enemies of England,—France and Spain, the House of Bourbon. It offered to recognize the independence of the American colonies, and to send no more reinforcements to the English garrisons of the United States. The war languished upon the American continent, where the discouraged English shut themselves up in the few places which they retained; and the Americans, exhausted with so many efforts, seemed waiting for the last positions of the enemy to fall of themselves.

This was not the case in the West Indies, where great naval forces confronted each other. Admiral Hood, who had so adroitly escaped De Grasse, had been rejoined by a squadron brought from Europe by Rodney; and the latter, on taking the chief command, had thirty-eight ships of the line under his flag. The French, joined to the Spaniards, were still greatly superior; and their plan was to attack Jamaica with fifty ships, and the

¹ Two million pounds in 1775, five million in 1776, five million in 1777, ten million in 1778, twelve million in 1779, twelve million in 1780, twelve million in 1781, in addition to the loans.—*Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. pp. 195, 309. In the concluding discussions, a statesman, Lord Mulgrave, let fall an assertion which caused great scandal; namely, that England had never been superior to France on the sea, when France had applied all her resources to the marine.—See Adolphus, *Reign of George III.*, book xlii.

numerous land forces assembled at Martinique, San Domingo, and Cuba.

It was necessary first of all to effect a junction between the French and the Spanish fleets on the coast of San Domingo. Until then, it had been as much to the interest of the French to avoid battle as to the English to give it. De Grasse set sail from Fort Royal in Martinique, April 8, with thirty-one ships of the line, two of fifty guns, and a convoy of one hundred and fifty sail. Bougainville and Vaudreuil commanded under him. He steered towards the channel which separates Dominica from Guadeloupe, in order to debouch to the windward of these islands. Rodney, who was observing him from St. Lucia, started in his pursuit. The French gained upon him, favored by a breeze by which the English vanguard alone could likewise profit. De Grasse could not resist the temptation to attack this vanguard, and take his revenge on Hood. Hood's division, indeed, was badly injured, without being overpowered; and, when the English centre came up to its assistance, De Grasse determined to avoid a general engagement, in which he succeeded (April 9). Rodney employed the night in rallying his forces and recovering from the shock. De Grasse sent on his convoy, under the escort of two fifty-gun ships, and pursued his course, leaving at Guadeloupe two other ships, separated from him, or obliged to put in by accidents of the sea. April 11, he was almost out of sight of the enemy. During the night of April 10-12, a seventy-four-gun ship, injured by awkwardly running foul, fell behind, and could no longer follow. The commonest prudence prescribed the sacrifice of this vessel. De Grasse, without taking counsel of any one, tacked about, returned to disengage the lagging ship, and sent her to Guadeloupe. This insane movement rendered battle with twenty-eight ships against thirty-eight inevitable.

April 12, at seven in the morning, the firing was opened along the whole line. The French displayed a steadfast courage, and maintained the conflict without marked disadvantage till about noon. Rodney at length succeeded, by the superiority of his manœuvring, in breaking their line and gaining the wind. From that time the disorder was irretrievable. Each French ship could do nothing but to make a desperate defence in the position where it had been thrown by the chances of battle and the sea. Several ships of Bougainville's squadron, moreover, which had fallen to the leeward, found it almost impossible to share the last efforts of their companions in arms. Numbers prevailed. The skilful

major-general of the French fleets, Du Pavillon, and the intrepid La Clochetterie, who had gloriously opened this war by the engagement of the *Belle Poule*, were struck dead, with many other choice men. Three ships of seventy-four and one of sixty-four guns were taken, after having lost almost all their officers and the greater part of their crews. Bougainville saved a fifth ship, ready to succumb; but no one, despite generous efforts, could succeed in effectively succoring De Grasse, who, in the magnificent ship of one hundred and ten guns, the *Ville de Paris*,¹ fought furiously until night against four English ships, which overpowered him with their combined fire. Finally, at six in the evening, a fifth adversary came up to finish the French admiral,—Admiral Hood. The imprudent and unfortunate De Grasse at length struck his flag. He had fought nearly twelve hours, and had on the deck of his vessel only three men not wounded, of whom he had the misfortune to be one. He had shown himself, in this fatal campaign, the bravest of soldiers, and the most incapable of leaders.

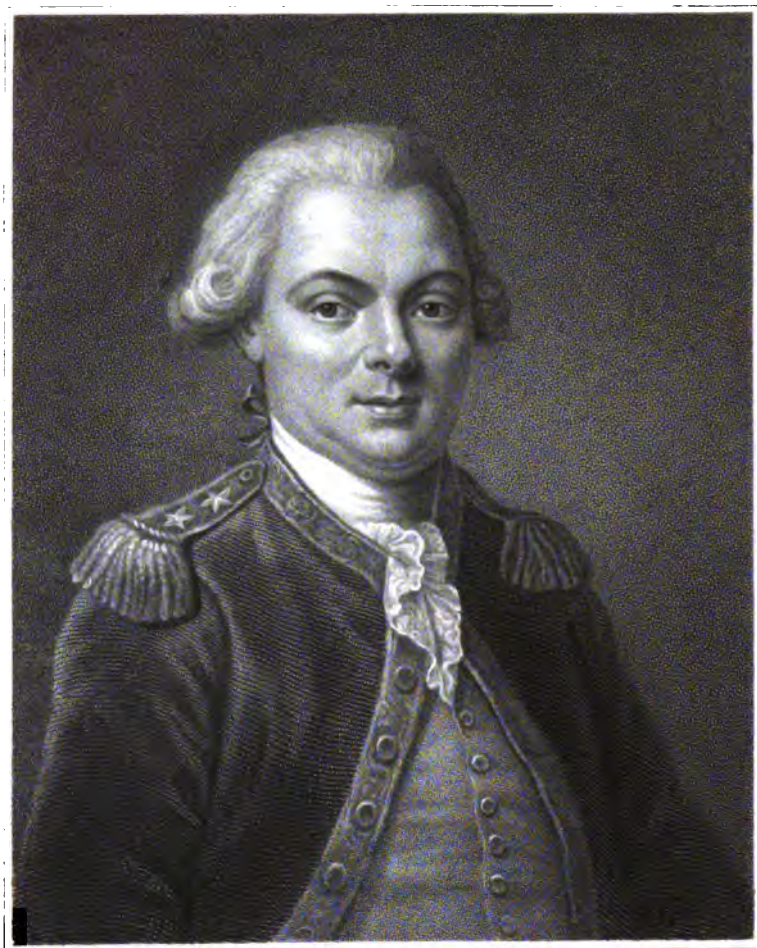
Night put an end to the battle. While the enemy, who had suffered greatly, was forming again in line, and repairing his injuries, the main body of the French fleet gained the open sea, and reached San Domingo; but the two sixty-four-gun ships, which had put in at Guadeloupe, having sailed again without hearing of the engagement, fell among Hood's squadron, and swelled the success of the English.

This victory was very consoling to British self-love, and the only naval action in this war, the results of which had been wholly decisive. It was, however, only a defensive victory. Jamaica was saved; but, far from the French or the Spanish West Indies falling a prey to the conquerors, the English did not even consider themselves able to undertake to recapture their islands conquered by the French. The trophies of their triumph escaped them. One of the ships taken, the *César*, blew up, the night after the battle, with its crew and the English who held her. The French flag-ship, the *Ville de Paris*, and another vessel sent from the West Indies to England, were sunk in a tempest with two English ships which accompanied them. A fourth of our ships which had been captured by the English was sunk by two French frigates; a fifth shortly after foundered at sea. Little remained to the victors of their trophies except the captive admiral, whom

¹ This was the ship presented to Louis XV., in 1762, by the municipal corporation of Paris.

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Engraved by F. W. Smith

LA PÉROUSE.

*From a Miniature in the possession of
La Comtesse de V. de V.*

they sent to London. The British people gave a veritable ovation to the vanquished mariner, whose valor they extolled with proud generosity in order at the same time to extol their own glory. De Grasse did not sufficiently comprehend the true meaning of the acclamations which were lavished upon him, and lent himself to them with puerile vanity, ill sustaining the dignity of misfortune. Public opinion in France became so much the more severe to him.¹

The national feeling had borne these reverses with firmness. The repetition was witnessed of the great uprising which had been manifested among us after the last maritime disasters of the Seven-Years' War. Large subscriptions were opened in corporations and among private individuals for the purpose of repairing the losses of our navy. The municipal corps of Paris set the example by offering a ship of the line to the King. It is affirmed that the subscriptions amounted to a sum sufficient for the construction of fourteen ships.² The attitude of the French navy in America corresponded to the energetic manifestations of the nation. Far from being disheartened, it made several offensive expeditions. Captain la Peyrouse, afterwards so celebrated for his great voyage and his tragical and mysterious end, detached with a small squadron, destroyed the English settlements on Hudson's Bay, the entrepôt of the peltry trade.³ Another detachment took possession of Turk Islands; islets full of rich salt-works at the south-eastern extremity of the Archipelago of the Bahamas. The Spaniards, on their side, took the Bahama Islands.

Our allies faithfully kept their engagements. The proposals of the new English ministry, which reached the United States simultaneously with the news of the defeat of Admiral de Grasse, were unhesitatingly rejected by Congress; and all the assemblies of the Thirteen States declared any one an enemy of his country who should propose to negotiate without the coöperation of France.⁴ The English, nevertheless, evacuated Savannah and Charleston to concentrate at New York.

Holland had likewise rejected the offers of a separate treaty

¹ *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. pp. 217-244; *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, t. IV. pp. 61-71; L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime*, t. II. pp. 517-526; Adolphus, *Reign of George III.*, book xliii.

² *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. p. 246.

³ He had the humanity to spare a storehouse filled with provisions, in order that the English, who had fled into the woods, might find something on their return on which to subsist. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. p. 423.

⁴ *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, t. IV. p. 76.

which England had addressed to her through the medium of Russia, unfaithful to the *armed neutrality*.

In Europe, the operations displayed activity, this year, at a single point alone. Minorca once reconquered, the court of Spain had but one thought, — at any price to recover Gibraltar, which, blockaded for three years, had been several times revictualled, but which, nevertheless, was reduced to painful extremities. The wisest course seemed to be to complete the blockade, and to profit by the superiority of the combined fleets to attempt to prevent any new assistance. The Spaniards lost patience. Their first siege works had been destroyed by a vigorous sortie of the garrison (November, 1781): they reëstablished and increased them. An attack by main force upon the impregnable rock of Gibraltar was resolved on. Two French princes, the Count d'Artois and the Duke de Bourbon, hastened to witness this great spectacle. On the land side, an immense battery of more than two hundred pieces of artillery was stretched across the whole peninsula. On the side of the sea, ten floating batteries, — large ships razed, protected with enormous pieces of wood, covered with cork and green hides, and furnished within with tanks of water, — carrying one hundred and fifty guns and mortars, were to be supported by a flotilla of gunboats and by the great Franco-Spanish fleet.

The fleet, commanded by the aged Cordova, and numbering forty-five ships of the line, arrived September 12, having captured on its way a large English convoy destined for Canada and Newfoundland. The next day, a deluge of fire inundated Gibraltar. The straits resounded, for a whole day and night, with a tempest of artillery, which carried dismay even among the inhabitants of Morocco. The storm passed in vain. On the land side, the myriads of projectiles, hurled by the assailants, uselessly struck the hollow rocks in which the enemy's cannon were concealed. On the side of the sea, the attack was badly concerted. The anchorage had been imperfectly reconnoitred: part of the floating batteries ran aground; the rest were injudiciously posted. The means invented to protect them from the red-hot shot were found inadequate. They were burned, some by the enemy, the rest by their crews, obliged to abandon them under the fire of the English, which drowned the greater part of these unfortunates. The fleet had been prevented by the sea from participating in the action.

After this unhappy engagement, the blockade was resumed; but the sea still favored the English. In consequence of a tem-

pest which had injured and dispersed the combined fleet, Admiral Howe, who had arrived from England with thirty-four ships of the line, succeeded in crossing the straits, and revictualling Gibraltar anew. The Franco-Spanish fleet was unable to overtake him until he had recrossed the straits. The vanguard of the confederates, commanded by La Motte-Piquet, warmly cannonaded and injured the English rearguard; but Admiral Howe avoided a general engagement, and regained the British waters (October 10-21).

The year 1782, which had begun so badly for the English, had become relatively fortunate for them; as, in the state of their affairs, they were fortunate in being able to defend themselves successfully, and in ceasing to lose. This year had cost the Spaniards and French great losses of men and *matériel*, fifteen ships of the line and four frigates: the English had lost only four ships and six frigates.

The great ministry, the successor of Lord North, did not profit by this partial change of fortune. This cabinet, so rich in celebrities, had been dissolved in less than four months, on account of personal questions. Fox, Burke, and Sheridan had quitted the ministry, and, by one of those singular combinations which are not infrequent in a parliamentary government, had coalesced with their former enemy, Lord North, against Lord Shelburne and the other ministers in office, among whom the younger William Pitt had just taken his place; a man of iron head and heart, an old politician at twenty-three, and as strong in will, of better sustained ability in public affairs, and less magnanimous, than his father.

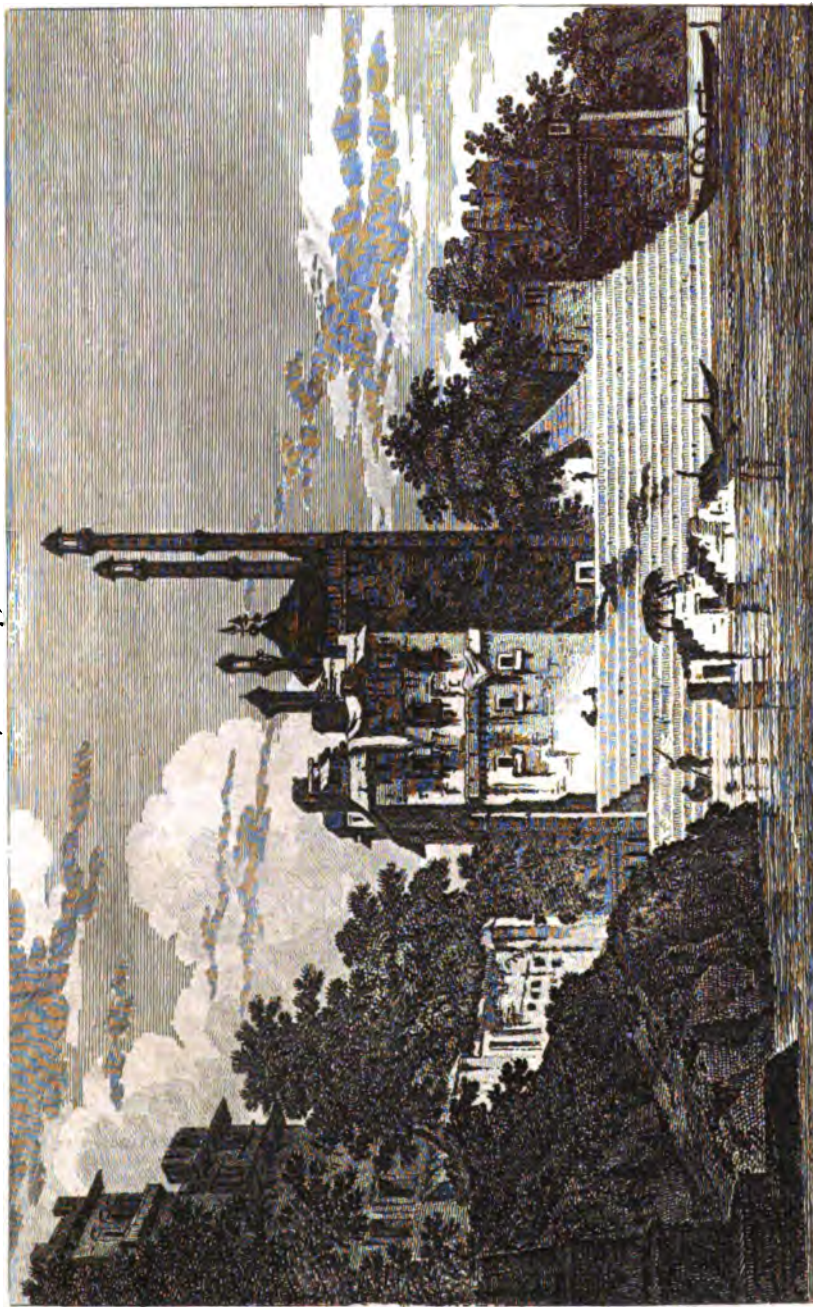
The successes in the West Indies and at Gibraltar did not suffice to reassure England, or to impose silence on the desire for peace which had been energetically manifested for some time within her limits. It was known that a colossal Franco-Spanish expedition was in preparation for the beginning of 1783: none knew whither it would be directed; and, this time, the star of Rodney might pale. A single defeat would have been irreparable. Meanwhile, the conquests in India, which promised to replace the empire lost by England in America, were seriously endangered. The genius of France, which had withdrawn with Dupleix from these rich countries, returned thither in a menacing manner with Suffren.

In the interval in the American War caused by the peace of 1763, the British rule in India, despite a partial reverse from Hy-

der Ali, had assumed enormous proportions. The English East-India Company, the master of Bengal and the maritime Circars in its own name, as the feudatory of the imperial phantom of Delhi and the Subahdar of the Deccan, and the master of the Carnatic in the name of the nabob, its protégé, or rather its slave, reigned despotically over all the eastern coast: it ruled the centre of Upper Hindostan, by turning to its advantage the last relics of the authority of the Great Mogul, and the centre of the peninsula, by substituting its influence for that formerly exercised by Bussi over the Subahdar of the Deccan; and had, lastly, strongly established itself on the western coast. But two adversaries of importance remained to it: in the west and the centre, the empire of the Mahrattas,—a revival of ancient India amidst the dissolution of the Great Mogul monarchy, the feudalism of the Kshatriyas (the military caste), governed by a council of Brahmins; and, in the south, the warlike monarchy of Mysore, improvised by the Mussulman, Hyder Ali.

At the beginning of 1779, an Anglo-Indian army, which had moved upon Poonah, the capital of the Mahrattas, was hemmed in, and forced to capitulate. At this signal, the aged Hyder Ali, at peace with the English for the last ten years, took up arms anew, allied himself with the Mahrattas and the Subahdar of the Deccan, and fell upon the Carnatic. A few hundred French adventurers, the relics of the renowned bands of Bussi, joyfully marched against the English under the banners of the Sultan of Mysore. After incidents which we need not recount (September 9, 1780), half of the English army was destroyed in the forests of Conjeveram. Almost all of the vast nabobship of the Carnatic, with its capital, Arcot, fell into the power of Hyder Ali. In the course of the following year (1781), a great rebellion broke out in the *holy city* of the Brahmins, Benares, against the tyrants of the Ganges. The atrocious government of Warren Hastings had driven these peaceful tribes to extremities.¹ Had a French expedition landed at this moment on the coast of Coromandel, the English power would have been annihilated in the Carnatic and the Circars, and greatly encroached upon everywhere else.

¹ Under Lord Clive, millions of men had perished by a great famine, not caused, but aggravated, by the barbarous cupidity of English speculators. Specious efforts have been made to justify Lord Clive personally; but it is impossible to find excuses for Hastings, though many historians treat him with inexplicable indulgence. His political genius was incontestable; but his morality was that of a leader of robbers. — See in the *Hist. de la fondation de l'Empire anglaise dans l'Inde*, by M. Barchou de Penhoën (t. III. liv. ix.), the hideous stories of women and old men tortured in order to wrest from them their treasures!

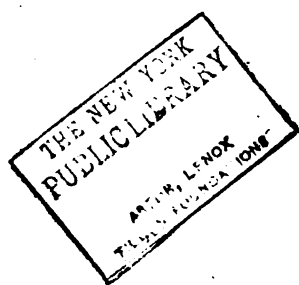


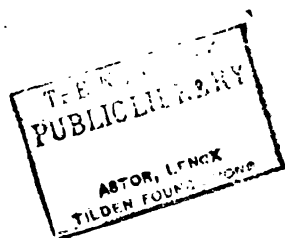
Engraved by Morris.

Drawn on the spot by H. Douglas.

A View of Part of the CITY of BENARES upon the Ganges.

Published by J. & W. G. Smith, 15, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.





Julien



Sartine and Montbarrei did not send a single soldier to India ! Sartine despatched to the Isle of France, from 1779 to 1780, five ships of the line, one of which was taken on the way. It was absurd to send ships without land forces. The commodore who commanded at the Isle of France might nevertheless have acted in the Indian seas, where the English had at first but two ships, and numbered but six at the close of 1779 ; but this commodore was that same Tronjoli who had shamefully abandoned the valorous Bellecombe in Pondicherry. He did not even show himself on the coasts of India ; and in 1780 departed, intrusting the command to Captain d'Orves, a brave man, but ill, and worn out in mind and body. It seemed as if officers and ships unfit for service were expressly chosen for India. M. d'Orves did not appear on the coast of Coromandel until February, 1781. The English squadron was at Malabar. Hyder Ali hastened to the coast to concert with the French. Any enterprise might have been undertaken. The English army had evacuated Pondicherry to retire to St. David, where it was shut in by Hyder Ali ; and Madras was uncovered, guarded only by five hundred invalids. D'Orves refused either to operate with his squadron, or to land the men of his vessels to reënforce the French auxiliaries of Hyder Ali, and returned to the Isle of France.¹ Hyder Ali, abandoned, valiantly continued the strife, and fought three battles in as many months with the English, who had received considerable assistance from Bengal (July-September, 1781). Three times he was constrained to yield the field of battle to European discipline ; but the enemy was never able either to take from him his artillery, or to prevent him from reorganizing and maintaining himself in the Carnatic.

The English had more fruitful successes elsewhere. From November, 1781, to January, 1782, they took possession of Negapatam and some other Dutch settlements on the coast of Coromandel ; then of Trincomalee, the best part of the Dutch island of Ceylon. The Mahrattas, meanwhile, were in full negotiation with the Supreme Council of Calcutta, which offered them an advantageous peace ; and Hyder Ali himself, no longer counting on the French, was disposed to treat ; when a man at length arrived in these waters, determined to employ all the powers of his heroic

¹ *Mém. MSS. du vicomte de Souillac*, in the archives of the marine, quoted by Ch. Cunat ; *Hist. du bailli de Suffren*, p. 86, 1852. M. de Souillac was the Governor of the Isle of France.

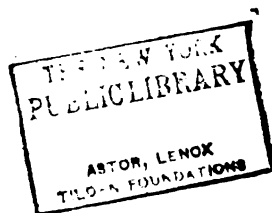
genius to prevent the English power from strengthening itself, — the Bailli de SUFFREN.¹

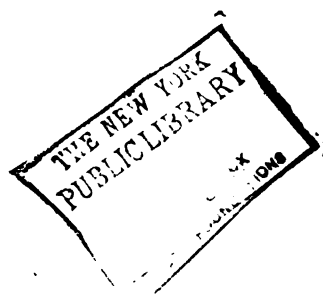
The new minister Castries, more resolute than enlightened, had not seen soon enough the necessity of repairing lost time by sending land forces to India; but he had at least the good sense to listen to D'Estaing in the choice of the leader of the naval forces which he despatched to the East. The brave admiral urgently recommended one of his former captains, in whom he had discerned the material for a great army commander. Suffren was placed at the head of five ships of the line,² commissioned to protect against the English the important Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope; then to operate in the waters of India. An English squadron of five ships of the line, three frigates, ten vessels of the East-India Company, etc., set out for the same destination. The possession of the Cape was the goal of the race; and the English vessels, all of which were copper-bottomed, were better sailers than ours. Suffren encountered the enemy at the Cape Verd Islands; audaciously attacked him in the Portuguese roadstead of Porto Praya (in the Island of Santiago), April 16, 1781; threw the English expedition into confusion; arrived before it; put the Cape of Good Hope in a state of defence; left some soldiers there; repaired to the Isle of France; persuaded his superior, Commodore d'Orves, to endeavor to repair the deplorable retreat of the preceding February; and set out with him for India, carrying the best part of the garrison of the Isle of France, nearly three thousand soldiers, whom the zealous Governor Souillac intrusted to him without orders from the ministry.

The squadron began its career in the waters of India by the capture of a fifty-gun ship. The winds protected from the French the six ships of Admiral Hughes, who took refuge in the roadstead of Madras, where he was joined by three of the ships which Suffren had encountered at Porto Praya, then bravely issued forth to offer battle. The English had nine ships against twelve, but in a much better condition than ours. Suffren had the chief command. D'Orves had just died on board; thus nobly expiating the faults due to the weakening of disease. Had Suffren been well seconded, the English squadron would probably have been destroyed; but the lack of energy or the ill-will of part

¹ He had been called the commander, then the bailli, on account of his successive rank in the Order of Malta.

² Without frigates; an unpardonable error in the ministry. An army without light troops!





of the captains, dissatisfied at seeing themselves commanded by a junior officer, rendered the victory indecisive (February 17, 1782). These internal jealousies were the disgrace and the scourge of our navy. The English, however, seemed to acknowledge themselves conquered by abandoning the field of battle; and Suffren achieved his end by preventing Hyder Ali from treating with the enemy,¹ and landing at Porto Novo the troops designed to coöperate with the Mussulman hero; after which he returned to the coast of Ceylon in search of the English squadron, which had been reënforced by two ships. On the same day that De Grasse was conquered and taken in the West Indies (April 12, 1782), Suffren fought a second and terrible battle with Edward Hughes. The misconduct of two ships prevented him from obtaining a complete success, and a storm separated the squadrons. The English avoided a new engagement. Meanwhile Suffren received orders from the ministry to return to the Isle of France. His withdrawal would have destroyed the brilliant moral effect of his exploits. He generously disobeyed, although he had neither a harbor for shelter nor rigging for repairs, and scarcely any munitions or money. His genius, and the passionate devotion of the sailors, utter strangers to the unworthy calculations of certain of their leaders, supplied the place of every thing.

It was not, however, with a view to a shameful abandonment that the ministry had desired to recall Suffren to the Isle of France, but in order to concentrate an imposing force on this island, chosen as the point of attack. The ministry had resolved on a course, which, three years sooner, would have been productive of immense results: it despatched to India a man whose name still fascinated the imaginations of all, and who might have been worth an army, — the faithful companion of Dupleix, Bussi-Castelnau. Bussi, appointed commander-in-chief, arrived at the Isle of France, May 31, 1782; and stopped there to wait for the reënforcements promised by the cabinet of Versailles. The measures adopted, however, were unfortunate or imprudent: two important convoys, too feebly escorted, were captured on quitting the Channel, or driven back into the French ports (December, 1781–April, 1782). Bussi, ill, and a prey to impatience and anxiety, provisionally sent to Suffren all that was at his disposal, — two ships, a frigate, and some soldiers.

Suffren had just had a third encounter with Admiral Hughes.

¹ On the day after the naval engagement (February 18), Tippoo Saib, the son of Hyder Ali, destroyed an Anglo-Indian corps in Tanjore.

As badly seconded on the land as on the sea, he had vainly urged the commander of the land forces to recapture the key of the beautiful territory of Tanjore, Negapatam, wrested by the English from Holland. This commander chose, instead, to take possession of St. David, a place badly situated, and offering nothing but a simple open roadstead; and Suffren resolved to attack Negapatam himself, with the coöperation of Hyder Ali. It was necessary, first, to defeat the English squadron which covered this place. Suffren vigorously attacked it, with eleven ships against eleven better equipped; for the captain of the twelfth French ship, slightly damaged, shamefully deserted the line of battle. Another captain, whose ship of sixty-four guns was engaged with an English seventy-four, struck his flag; upon which two of those *officiers bleus*,¹ disdained by the vanity of the officers of the Great Corps, rushed to their cowardly commander, forced him to hoist his flag anew, ordered the fire to continue, and saved the ship. The ignominy of this captain was fully effaced by the heroism of Cuverville, who sustained, with a fifty-gun ship, the terrible fire of two ships of seventy-four and sixty-four guns, and, himself cut to pieces, disabled the stronger of his enemies. As to Suffren, he was worthy of himself: no more need be said. He was found everywhere, by turns attacking the enemy, or covering our ships in peril. Part of the English squadron gave way, and Hughes retired; but he regained the anchorage of Negapatam, and Suffren was not sufficiently a victor to effect his project (July 6, 1782). He indemnified himself by the recapture of the other Dutch settlement, Trincomalee; and at last conquered an excellent harbor, the possession of which wholly changed the position of the two parties in these waters (August 25-31). Edward Hughes arrived too late to succor it: he found, on coming in sight of the lost Trincomalee, only a fourth battle (September 3). Three French ships of the line, two of fifty and forty guns, and three transports, attacked twelve ships of the line and six transports. The same mistakes, or rather the same treachery, recurred. Suffren, a moment abandoned in the centre of the battle with two ships against five or six, saw his mainmast and his admiral's flag fall under a hail of shot. A hurrah of triumph rose from the English flag-ship. "Flags, flags!" exclaimed Suffren: "plant them everywhere around the *Héros*!"² The whole crew, partaking the desperate heroism of their leader,

¹ Port-officers, employed as *auxiliaries* with a brevet for the campaign.

² The name of his ship.

THE
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TIPPOO SULTAUN

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poured forth bullets and grape from every port-hole. Three English ships were riddled and cut to pieces by this furious onslaught. The French vanguard at length released its admiral, and the English beat a retreat during the night.

This bloody action retarded the plans of the English against St. David; but it had many other results. The leader of the odious cabal which had well-nigh caused the destruction of Suffren rendered partial justice to himself by requesting to set out for France with his accomplices, and the squadron was finally purged from them; but the harm which they had done appeared irreparable. They had prevented Suffren from insuring the stability of fortune. The French forces were diminishing: two of our ships had foundered at sea. The English, on the contrary, received a reinforcement of five ships; and the Dutch, whose colonies we had saved or recovered, gave us no assistance: a squadron of seven ships remained stationary at Batavia, another armament at the Cape! The Dutch commanders were paralyzed by the incurable perfidy of the stadtholder, whom the republican party had weakened without overthrowing.

The winds, so often favorable to our rivals, came this time to our aid. A hurricane disabled the enemy's squadron just as it was setting sail from Madras for Bombay (October 15), and unfitted it for service for several months. Suffren was unable to profit by the misfortune of Edward Hughes: he had agreed to meet Bussi in the roads of Acheen (the Island of Sumatra), for the purpose of returning together to attack Madras in concert with Hyder Ali; but the troops, which had at length joined Bussi in the Isle of France, were ravaged to such an extent by an epidemic, and the ships which transported them were in so bad a condition, that the junction of Bussi and Suffren, instead of taking place at Acheen in November, could not be effected until March 10, 1783, on the coast of Ceylon. A fatal event had occurred during the interval: one of the proudest and most profound geniuses that the East had ever produced had disappeared from the world: Hyder Ali was no more (December 7, 1782). It was a terrible blow to the French cause and to Suffren. These two great men had understood and fully relied upon each other.

Bussi and Suffren had no one to sustain their efforts but the son of Hyder Ali, Tippoo Saib, the inheritor, if not of his genius, at least of his courage and his hatred of England. But the position of affairs had greatly changed when Bussi landed at St. David, March 15, 1783, with twenty-five hundred soldiers. Tippoo, who,

at the moment of his father's death, had just completed the capture of Tanjore from the English, had been obliged to abandon this glorious conquest, and to quit the Carnatic to fly to the aid of the possessions of Mysore in the West. The English, tranquil with respect to the Mahrattas, who had just concluded a definitive peace on the news of the death of Hyder Ali, had made a powerful diversion from Bombay against the Mysore provinces of Malabar and Canara. Almost all of this coast rapidly fell into their power, and the interior of Mysore was encroached upon. Tippoo, on marching to Malabar, had only been able to leave ten thousand men in the Carnatic to take the field with the French. Bussi, greatly inferior in force to the English, did not, perhaps, derive all the advantage that he might have done from the resources at his disposal: grown old, tormented with the gout, and weakened by the effects of the epidemic with which he had been attacked at the Isle of France, he was no longer the brilliant and indefatigable companion of Dupleix; and little remained to him but his courage. He suffered himself to be forced back on St. David by the English general, Stuart, who had indeed nearly twenty thousand regular troops, of which four thousand were English, against from nine to ten thousand, twenty-two hundred of which were French.

June 13, a furious battle was fought under the walls of St. David. In the presence of the cannon, Bussi became himself again. Unable to keep his horse, he caused himself to be carried everywhere in a palanquin into the thickest of the fight. The English lost from a thousand to twelve hundred men, and were unable to force the French lines. During the night, however, on the news that the enemy was about to plant batteries of heavy masses of artillery, Bussi evacuated the outworks of the place, and shut himself up in St. David. The place was blockaded between Stuart's army and Hughes's squadron, which had finally returned from Bombay.

This did not last long. On the day after the battle, the sentinels on the rampart signalled Suffren in the offing. June 16, by skilful evolutions, Suffren succeeded in evading the English fleet, and opening communication with St. David. The two squadrons continued to manœuvre four days in sight of the city and the two armies; and it was not until the 20th that they engaged in their fifth battle within sixteen months. The English had the superiority at once in numbers and in armament, — sixteen ships of the line, and two fifty-gun ships, against thirteen ships of the line.

two fifty-gun ships, and one ship of forty guns. In this action, however, every one did his duty on board our fleet. By the command of Suffren, all our vessels approached the enemy within pistol-range. This fact suffices to indicate how terrible was the engagement. Among many tragical and glorious incidents must be cited the heroism of the *Flamand*, a fifty-gun ship, which, after suffering greatly, and losing its captain in the beginning of the action, attacked an eighty-gun ship which was attempting to break through our line, and forced it to retreat. The English gave way, closely pressed, under the incessant volleys of the artillery which shattered them. Darkness came to cover their retreat. Admiral Hughes escaped a new engagement by his superiority in sailing, and took refuge at Madras. Suffren triumphantly reappeared before St. David, June 23, and landed his men amidst the shouts of rejoicing of the French army, who demanded that the English lines should be attacked the next day. Bussi has been reproached for having hesitated, and for having only permitted a partial sortie on the 25th, which was badly conducted, and was repelled by the enemy. Despite this trifling success, cut off from the sea, confronted by a garrison reënforced and full of ardor, and harassed in its rear by several thousand Mysore horsemen, who intercepted its supplies, the English army was greatly endangered. Its defeat appeared merely postponed. The news was excellent for the French. French and Dutch convoys were on the way from the Isle of France. Tippoo Saib, worthy of his father, had just captured in Bednore the main body of the English forces which had ravaged Malabar with a cruelty and rapacity unworthy of a civilized army. Our cause was reviving in India; and all might still be repaired.

During the interval, June 29, an English frigate brought different intelligence to Suffren and Bussi. Peace was concluded; and India remained definitively in the hands of the English, in compensation for the loss of America! ¹

From 1779 to 1781, Austria and Russia had made some attempts to offer their mediation to the belligerent powers, which had been ineffectual; England having declined any negotiation in

¹ Concerning the campaigns in India, see *Hist. du bailli de Suffren*, by Ch. Cunat, Rennes, 1852; *Hist. de la fondation de l'Empire anglais dans l'Inde*, by Barchou de Penhoën, t. III. liv. x.-xi. The last of the great mariners of ancient France was mortally wounded in a duel, December 8, 1788, by a courtier, the Prince de Mirepoix, whose nephews, naval officers, he had treated with merited severity. The cause of his death was kept concealed. — See Ch. Cunat, p. 345.

which the *rebel colonies* were admitted. Joseph II. and Catharine, who dreamed together of the partition of the Ottoman empire, were not doubtless sincerely desirous of a peace which would restore leisure to the maritime powers to counteract their projects; but Russia followed her inclination to meddle with every thing, and Austria was inclined to renew her former relations with England.¹

The aged Maurepas died, meanwhile (November 14, 1781), after having done all the harm that he could do to France by overthrowing Necker after Turgot. His death, which would have been a great blessing had it happened sooner, was an unimportant event: affairs went on after him as they would have done had he lived. No one completely took his place with the King: the chief influence, however, fell to the minister of foreign affairs, M. de Vergennes, who succeeded to the title of chief of the council of finance. Vergennes, far from being capable of bearing the burden of prime minister, was not even equal to great emergencies in his own special ministry. He was speedily to be put to the test.

In March, 1782, during the closing days of the cabinet of Lord North, this minister, bending under the reverses of the preceding campaign, had despatched an agent to Paris to sound the French government. The negotiations were continued in behalf of the new cabinet which replaced Lord North, and which, meanwhile, taking the opposite course from the fallen ministry, had thought at first of negotiating with America and Holland while continuing the war against the House of Bourbon. Alike repulsed at Paris by the illustrious plenipotentiary of the United States, Franklin (April 15), and in America by Congress itself (May), the English ministry resigned itself to the necessity of entering upon a simultaneous negotiation at Paris with France, Spain, America, and Holland. Louis XVI., or rather M. de Vergennes, in a note to the English envoy, accepted as a basis the treaty of Paris, with the exception of certain changes to be agreed upon; among other points, relative to the East Indies, to Africa, to the Newfoundland fishery, and to a commercial treaty. No special mention was made of the

¹ Joseph II. even attempted to detach Spain from France by offering to secure for her the restoration of Gibraltar (August, 1780). Carlos III. loyally rejected this lure. — Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 59, according to a memorial found among the papers of Louis XVI. According to W. Coxe (*Hist. d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. V.), the Spanish cabinet was less scrupulous; and would gladly have treated, had the English seriously offered it Gibraltar.

West Indies. This starting-point was feeble, and promised little, — the acceptance as a basis of the deplorable treaty of 1763!

The modification which occurred in the English ministry, the retirement of Mr. Fox and his friends (the end of June, 1782), did not affect the progress of the negotiation. The interests of France were very tamely sustained therein. The warmest and longest discussion was concerning those of Spain. Carlos III. obstinately demanded Gibraltar. England defended the citadel of the great straits by diplomacy as by arms: the prime minister, Lord Shelburne, nevertheless, finally seemed disposed to yield, but at the price of the restitution of Minorca and the Floridas, and of vast concessions in the West Indies; then he became terrified at the thought of giving up Gibraltar, even for such a ransom, and offered instead the cession of Minorca and the Floridas. Spain accepted.

There had been no serious difficulty with the French cabinet except on a single point, the Island of Dominica. Louis XVI., urged on by a few of his ministers, especially by Castries, at first showed some firmness. This question should never have been yielded. Dominica, so happily conquered, was of importance only as an offensive position against the wealthy islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Lord Shelburne refused to abandon it. His refusal should have been accepted, and a new campaign begun. All the chances were in our favor. An immense Franco-Spanish fleet was assembled at Cadiz in order to operate at the beginning of 1783. D'Estaing, the favorite leader of the soldiers and the sailors, at length recalled to the head of our armies, was to command sixty-six ships of the line and a land force of twenty-four thousand soldiers, with La Fayette for major-general. This whirlwind of men and ships was to burst first upon Jamaica, and afterwards to proceed to Canada and Newfoundland; and a squadron of ten ships was to be detached to the East Indies. Holland, wresting herself from the intrigues of the stadtholder, was at last in a position to participate seriously in the war in Asia. England had not the forces necessary to repel so terrible a shock; and every thing seemed to announce great reverses in India, and perhaps the loss of what remained to her in America, both islands and continent.¹

Lord Shelburne knew the perils of England; but he also knew the immoderate desire for peace which M. de Vergennes had suf-

¹ *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 3, et seq.; Soulas, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. pp. 12-26; Flasseau, t. VII. p. 362.

ferred to transpire.¹ He gained the cause! Louis XVI. consented to restore Dominica, and George III. announced to the British parliament the hope of a speedy peace.

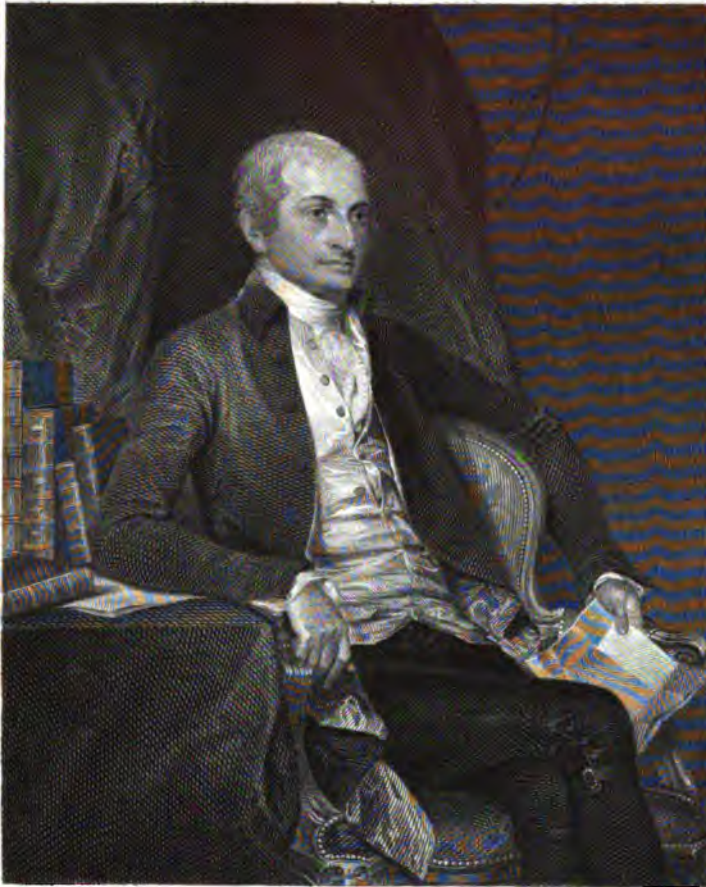
An incident well-nigh overthrew every thing. At the end of November, the American commissioners, Franklin, John Adams, John Jay, and Henry Laurens, signed the preliminaries of peace at Paris with the English plenipotentiary, Oswald, instead of waiting, as had been agreed upon, for the treaty of France to be finished, that both might be signed at the same time. At this intelligence, Lord Richmond, the younger Pitt, and the greater part of the members of the English cabinet, wished to break off the negotiation with France, and to offer the Americans a close alliance against her. The chimerical spirit of Lord Richmond, and the passionate hatred of France which the second Pitt had inherited, blinded them to the precipice towards which they were hurrying England. Lord Shelburne threw himself in their way with despairing energy, and arrested them.² They had refused to see that one of the leading clauses of the preliminaries with the United States provided that the agreements should be of no effect until after the conclusion of peace with France; that is, that the Americans would continue the war until their allies had received satisfaction. America was so little inclined to the arrangement dreamed of by the English, that the secretary of foreign affairs of the United States, Livingston, strongly censured the *lack of courtesy* of which the plenipotentiaries had rendered themselves guilty, as was acknowledged by Franklin, who "had yielded too easily to his colleagues."³ As to the idea of a league with England against France, an idea which was certainly very far from the thoughts of Franklin and his colleagues, it would have been hooted at in Congress.

The preliminaries of peace between France and England and between England and Spain were signed January 10, 1783. The parliament received them by a violent storm. Lord Shelburne lost his place in return for the service which he had rendered his country in obtaining conditions of peace much less disadvantageous than comported with the situation, but far different from

¹ "Had your court shown less desire to end the war, it would have obtained greater sacrifices from us." — Words of Lord Shelburne to M. de Bouillé, cited in the memorial to the King, ap. Soularie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 17.

² Garden, *Hist. des Traités de paix*, t. IV. p. 329.

³ Letter from M. de Vergennes, cited by P. Chasles; art. *Franklin*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, t. XXVI. p. 294; 1841. This study on Franklin, very unfriendly, and more witty than accurate, should be read with much reservation.



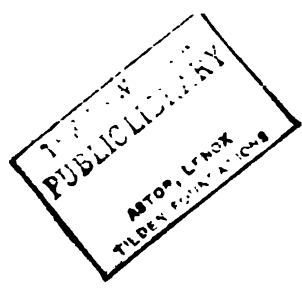
Painted by Thomas G. Dewhurst

Engraved by A.D. Duncanson

JOHN JAY

John Jay —

Entered according to the act of Congress in the year 1834 by James Herring in the clerks office of the
District Court of the Southern District of N York.



that treaty of 1763 to which British pride would have gladly chained history. The singular coalition of Fox and North arrived at power, but took good care not to refuse the ratification of the compact which it had censured. Sundry secondary points concerning the interpretation of certain articles relative to Spain, but, above all, the compromise with Holland, retarded the definitive treaties some months longer. The cabinet of Versailles committed the fault of concluding the preliminaries before the interests of Holland were regulated; a fault less grave in point of decorum than that of the American commissioners towards France, since the obligations were not the same, but more serious, in point of fact, in its consequences. England, too sure that the cabinet of Versailles would not reopen hostilities, was inflexible in her demands on Holland; and the latter was forced to open the waters of the Moluccas to European commerce, and to cede Negapatam, the best roadstead on the coast of Coromandel.

The definitive treaties were signed September 3, 1783.

England recognized the full independence of the United States, withdrew her troops from New York and from the other parts of the American territory which she still occupied, and acknowledged as the boundaries of the United States the River St. Croix, the mountains which separate the basin of the St. Lawrence from the basins of the North-American rivers, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi to the thirty-first degree of north latitude. South of this latitude, as west of the Mississippi, England reserved her rights only to cede them to Spain. The Americans had the right of fishery off Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

England restored to France the Islands of St. Peter and Miquelon, in *full possession*; that is, without renewing the interdiction to fortify them, stipulated in the treaty of 1763. France renounced the right of fishery on the part of the eastern coast of Newfoundland between Cape Bona Vista and Cape St. John, and acquired it on the part of the western coast between Port-à-Choix and Cape Ray: an extremely disadvantageous exchange; for the fishing is much better on the eastern coast of Newfoundland, which fronts the Grand Bank and the offing, than on the western shore.¹

England restored to France, in the West Indies, the Island

¹ An excellent Memorial, addressed to Vergennes by the consuls of St. Malo, had nevertheless fully informed the ministry concerning the Newfoundland question. — See this Memorial in Soulas, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 387.

of St. Lucia, and abandoned Tobago. France restored Grenada and the Grenadine Islands, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Christopher, Nevis, and Montserrat. England abandoned Senegal and its dependencies (Podor, Galam, Arguin, and Portendic), and restored Gorée, which the French had evacuated in order to concentrate at St. Louis in Senegal, and which the English had occupied. France guaranteed to England Fort St. James and Gambia. The English were empowered to carry on the gum trade from the mouth of the St. John's River to Portendic. England restored Pondicherry and Karikal, with the cession of a small territory around them, Mahé, and Chandernagore, "with the liberty to surround it with a ditch for the purpose of carrying off the water," (what a favor!) and the French factories at Orixá, Surat, etc. She promised the French the reestablishment of free trade as it was formerly carried on by the Indian Company of France. "It is agreed," says the treaty, "that if, within the term of four months, the respective allies (in India) have not assented to the present pacification, or made a separate accommodation, no direct or indirect assistance shall longer be given them."

This was the complete abandonment of the Sultan of Mysore.¹

England consented to the abrogation of the prohibition to fortify Dunkirk and restore its harbor. The insult to the old age of Louis the Great was at least effaced by rejuvenated France.

The two crowns agreed to conclude a commercial treaty before January 1, 1786.²

England ceded Minorca and the two Floridas to Spain. Spain restored the Bahama Islands.

Holland ceded Negapatam, and promised not to obstruct English navigation in the Eastern waters (the waters of the Spice Islands), so long monopolized by the Dutch.³

Despite all that has been said of this peace, which did not adequately repair the calamities of 1763, France had accomplished a very great work. The philosophy of the eighteenth century had had its *crusade*, more successful than those of the Middle Ages. A new phenomenon arose from it in the political world. Hitherto, aristocracy had scarcely ever been seen radically extirpated except

¹ Tippoo Saib bravely continued the contest, and obtained an honorable peace.

² All the copies of the treaty were drawn up in French, "from which no inference was to be drawn."

³ See the treaties in the *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, by Soule, t. IV., documents.

by despotism: aristocracy, that is, the liberty of the few, was lost in the equality of servitude. When this partial liberty, let us say in passing, disappears in such a manner that liberty no longer exists anywhere, we do not see wherein the dignity or the progress of the human race is the gainer. America set the first great example in the contrary direction,—the example of liberty in equality, of true democracy, succeeding to aristocratic liberty; the first and the triumphant application of the theory of right according to the eighteenth century. Elsewhere, on a soil more imperfectly prepared, and formed of more complex elements, this theory, brought back from America to the place of its origin by our knights of liberty, would exact far more terrible efforts, and obtain successes far more questionable and more painful, in its work, overthrown again and again, and as often resumed!

France had accomplished the duties of her providential mission: her moral interests, the interests of her glory and her ideas, were satisfied. The interests of her material power had been badly defended by her government: the only solid advantage which she had obtained was that of depriving the English of Minorca, that curb on Toulon, far more dangerous to us in their hands than Gibraltar. The most important reason alleged by Vergennes for hastening peace had been the state of the finances. As early as September 27, 1780, he wrote to the King that “the alarming state of affairs . . . seemed to leave no resource but the most speedy peace.” Necker had once more revived public credit at the beginning of 1781 by a brilliant stroke to which we shall revert, and would have also found means of supporting the campaign of 1783; but the fatal cabal which had overthrown Turgot had not been long in overthrowing Necker in turn, and Vergennes had been one of the most active members of this cabal. The relapse of the finances was therefore his condemnation. “The expenses,” he said to the King, “are an abyss which none can fathom.”

This abyss, indeed, was about to swallow up the monarchy,

¹ Flanagan, t. VII. p. 361. England, on her side, was in extreme financial distress. Her annual debt had risen from £4,500,000 to £9,500,000: the tax on real estate, and the other taxes, were enormous. England had lost, since the beginning of the war, sixteen ships of from fifty to one hundred and ten guns, and forty-nine frigates or corvettes of from twenty to forty guns; France, nineteen ships and twenty-nine frigates and corvettes. — See the list in the *Hist. de Suffren*, by Ch. Cunat, *pièces justific.* No. 32. The war had cost France more than twelve hundred million francs; England, more than double this amount.

as a punishment for not having been wise enough to fill it up in time by casting into it the privileges.

The American War at once postponed and paved the way for the Revolution: it afforded a temporary diversion abroad to the most energetic sentiments of France; but these sentiments returned to us, defined and strengthened by the sight of facts more powerful than books and theories,¹ at the same time that the heavy burdens of the war, clogging the car of State, which was not lightened in compensation by a radical reform, accelerated the impulse which precipitated it over the fatal declivity.²

¹ The presence of Franklin at Paris, personifying the republic under a form so worthy of respect, exercised a great moral influence. Our philosophers, in discussing with him at Paris the American Constitution, prepared themselves to discuss the future laws of the French Revolution. A royalist publicist, Mallet-Dupan, has preserved for us a great saying, which Franklin, he says, repeated more than once to his pupils at Paris: "He who shall carry into politics the principles of primitive Christianity will change the face of the world."

² In justice to our readers, we would state that the annotations to the preceding chapter proffered by Mr. Bancroft, and announced in the Preface to *The Age of Louis XIV.*, have been withheld by that gentleman from the after-consideration that it would be presumptuous to annotate M. Martin's *chef d'œuvre*. — T₂.

CHAPTER VII.

LOUIS XVI. (CONTINUED.)

NECKER'S MINISTRY. Financial Condition of France under Necker and his Successors, to 1783. Economic and Judicial Improvements. Provincial Assemblies. *Official Report of the Finances.* Dismission of Necker. Reaction. Death of Maurepas. Calonne called to the Finances. **MANNERS, IDEAS, LETTERS, AND SCIENCES** after the American War. The Circle of the Queen. *The Marriage of Figaro.* Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Lagrange. **LAVOISIER.** The Aeronauts. Condorcet. Mystical Movement. Mesmer. Saint-Martin. Free-Masonry. **MIRABEAU.**

1778-1789.

It has been necessary to postpone the exposition of the internal operations of Necker in order not to interrupt the narrative of military events. We must now sum up these operations, for the purpose of presenting, in all its different phases, the state of France after the peace of 1783.

From his entrance into the finances until the opening of hostilities against England, we have seen Necker laboring to put the public accounts in order, and to pave the way for the reformation of the sinecures and waste in the King's household, the collection of the taxes, and the hospitals. The war once entered into, his first duty and his most lively anxiety was necessarily to provide for its expenses. He did this by borrowing, without levying new taxes, and without giving the lenders any other pledge or guarantee than the promise to reduce the expenditures in order to liberate a part of the revenue. Whatever may have been said by his adversaries,¹ he did the best that could have been done:² for taxation, even though ruinous,—even though exaggerated to impossibility,—would not have given him what he obtained by loans; and France was assuredly in one of those crises in which it is legitimate to burden the future. Necker borrowed, in the midst of war, on conditions which other ministers, Turgot excepted, would scarcely have obtained in time of peace.³

¹ The most violent was Mirabeau. — See his pamphlet of 1787, *Lettre sur l'administration de M. Necker.*

² In a financial point of view; for a reservation should be made, in a moral point of view, as to the methods employed in most of his loans, — lotteries and life-rentes.

³ There were exceptions, nevertheless. Necker deceived himself, or was deceived, in

He none the less continued the internal reforms, so far as the state of affairs permitted. If he did few great things, if nothing in him revealed vast plans like those of Turgot, it must at least be admitted that all the modifications which he introduced into the financial system were well conceived. He had begun and he completed the centralization of the accountability in the royal treasury, so that the government could annually take an account of its receipts and expenditures, — a thing which had long been impossible, a very large part of the expenditures for which different funds were assigned not having been recorded on the books of the keeper of the treasury. He caused a general list of the pensions to be made: this simple measure, by revealing to the King the duplications and abuses of all kinds, concealed by the financial confusion, influenced him to authorize a reform, which Necker, however, did not dare to solicit immediately. Necker resumed at the top of the scale the reduction of financial offices which Turgot had entered upon at the bottom. He reduced to twelve the forty-eight receivers-general, and interdicted to them all disposal of funds without the permission of the minister; he reduced to two the twenty-seven treasurers of war and the marine, with the same interdiction, and thus succeeded in depriving these two ministries of their financial independence towards the minister of finance. More than five hundred offices, that is to say, more than five hundred sinecures, involving privileges with respect to taxation, were abolished in the King's household (1779-1780).

A decree of the council, August 15, 1779, acknowledging that "the numerous tolls levied on the highways and navigable rivers, . . . duties which, for the most part, had grown out of the misfortunes and confusion of ancient times, . . . fettered and embarrassed commerce, and formed so many obstacles to the facility of intercourse," enjoined on all the proprietors of these rights immediately to communicate their titles to them to the council, in order that arrangements might be made for their redemption with an indemnity. Another decree of the council, of great importance, January 9, 1780, effected a profound change in the administration of the indirect taxes. The intention of "throwing off the former dependence upon financial aid" was explicitly declared therein: Necker aimed at having to deal with no other financiers than the bankers who subscribed to his loans. The power

some of his schemes of *life-rentes* and tontines, by his former fellows, the Genevese bankers, who, however, procured him very large sums, — one hundred millions, it is said.

ful company of farmers-general was divided into three companies, — 1st, The *general farm*, which retained nothing but the *traites* (external and internal customs), the salt-taxes, and the tobaccos; 2d, The *general administration by the government* (*régie*), which had the aids or excise duties, and other duties on the manufacture of various articles of commerce; 3d, The *general administration of the domains and domanial rights*, rights to which was adjoined the collection of the *droit de greffe* (the right of selling various offices connected with the custody of judicial and notarial acts) and of the mortgage fees. The farmers-general were entitled, besides five per cent on their security of twelve hundred thousand francs, to a regular salary of thirty thousand francs, together with a share in the revenue from the taxes farmed, above a minimum which they guaranteed to the King. This was a transition from the system of farming the indirect taxes to that of administering them directly by the government, and the most important, perhaps, of the financial measures of Necker. The State gained thereby on the spot fourteen millions a year.¹ The decree of the council concerning the farms was followed by a declaration (February 13), announcing that the villain-tax, the capitation-tax, and the accessories to the villain-tax, could be increased thenceforth only by laws registered in the superior courts. The King reserved the right of examining whether these taxes were justly apportioned among the generalities, and announced a similar investigation with respect to the salt-tax, the customs, and the aids.

Necker, in truth, before dictating to the King the promise not to increase the direct taxes in future, without the forms of law, had himself increased them five or six millions by the same measures as those of his predecessors. He also prolonged the first twentieth for ten years (February, 1780), together with the eight sous per livre on all the duties, and the portion of the *octrois* collected in behalf of the treasury, and procured ten millions by authorizing the hospitals to make sales of real estate; the proceeds of which were to be paid into the treasury in exchange for titles of *rentes*, to be increased one-tenth every twenty-five years in order to compensate for the depreciation of the precious metals. He lastly obtained thirty millions from the assembly of the clergy, sixteen millions as a gratuitous offering, and fourteen as a loan, redeemable in fourteen years from the revenue of the farms (June, 1780).

¹ Dros, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 282.

A decree of the council, which also promised considerable resources, was that which prescribed the revision of the pledged domains. In accordance with the principle of the inviolability of the royal domain, the government had a right, at each change of reign, to retract all the grants that had been made. Necker, January 14, 1781, enjoined on the holders of these, whether by favor or for a pecuniary consideration, to present the titles and the statement of their possessions in the course of the year, in order that the administration of the domains might fix the rent, or the supplementary rent which would be imposed on them, unless they preferred the redemption of their claims. The greater part of the alienations had been gratuitous, or nearly gratuitous favors, bestowed on princes, courtiers, and men in credit.

The ministry of Necker was signalized, apart from purely financial questions, by a number of measures, as well social and economic as philanthropic, proceeding directly or indirectly from the influence of this statesman: for instance, in industrial matters, the prohibition to export looms, tools, and instruments used in manufactures (March 3, 1779), a prohibition emanating from the *protective* system; and the regulation on manufactures (May 5, 1779), an attempt at a mixed system between regulation and free competition. The industrial code, "become, by its complication and its antiquity, difficult of execution," was abandoned: each manufacturing town was requested to present to the council new plans of regulations "adapted to the present time." The *regulated* fabrics were to have private marks. Outside the regulations, the manufacturers were to have full liberty to make new or different fabrics, with no other interdiction than that of affixing the marks thereto which were the official guarantee of good manufacture. In a different order of things must be cited the abolition of the penalty of death for horse-stealing, in use in the local laws of Flanders (July, 1778); and especially the celebrated edict of August, 1779, decreeing the abolition of mortmain, and of personal servitude in the domains of the King. This was still only a partial victory of the rights of nature and humanity. Louis XVI., disputed between his good feelings and his prejudices, feared "injuring the laws of property," should he free, by an authoritative stroke, the serfs of the seigniors at the same time with his own. A considerable number of Frenchmen remained for some time longer chained to the feudal glebe, and even deprived of the right of marrying at their pleasure, and transmitting to their

children the fruit of their labors.¹ The manes of Voltaire had not the consolation of witnessing the enfranchisement of those serfs of the Jura for whom the patriarch of Ferney had eloquently pleaded against the tyranny of the chapter of Saint-Claude. The seignior-monks refused to participate in the beneficence of the King unless indemnified. Louis dared deprive the seigniors only of the right of *suite*, by virtue of which the *body* serfs who had escaped from the glebe were *pursued* and seized on free soil, with their goods and *acquêts*, by the seignior. The tribunals had encouraged the weak monarch by their example: they hesitated to acknowledge this *excessive right*, disputed, as early as the Middle Ages, by the princes, the founders of *free cities*.

A declaration of August 24, 1780, which made no less noise, at length satisfied the energetic demands of philosophy. The *preparatory question*, inflicted on the accused to wring from him a confession of guilt, was abolished in France, too late for the honor of our government, since it had already ceased in several States greatly inferior to France in civilization. The *preliminary question*, to which the condemned was subjected to force him to reveal his accomplices, was maintained until 1788; and, moreover, the declaration of May 1, 1788, which abolished it, was definitively executed only by a law of the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (October 9, 1789). A few days after the abolition of the *preparatory question* (August 30, 1780), a declaration concerning the prison system prescribed the separation of the accused, the condemned, and the prisoners for debt, and promised the abolition of all subterranean dungeons, — those sad monuments of the cruelty of past times.

The formation of a commission to examine the petitions for the suppression and the union or transfer of titles of benefices and ecclesiastical property indicates that the clergy continued to lose ground (March 10, 1780).²

Necker greatly agitated the public mind and raised up warm controversies by resuming a shred of the plan of Turgot. We have already described the vast organization projected by Turgot, and which was to set out from the commune to reach a kind of national consultative assembly. Necker threw aside the base and the sum-

¹ The *tenement* serf could leave his property to his children only if they formed a common household: if the child had quitted the paternal roof, the seignior became the inheritor.

² Concerning all these measures, see *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. and XXVI., *passim*, of the dates indicated. — Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II.

mit of this work, and appropriated the intermediate part while perverting its nature. A decree of the council, July 12, 1778, prescribed the formation, in the province of Berry, of an assembly composed of twelve ecclesiastics, twelve landed proprietors of noble birth, and twenty-four members of the Third Estate, twelve of whom were to be deputies from the towns, and twelve land-owners from the rural districts, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Bourges, "for the purpose of apportioning and levying the (direct) taxes in the province, and superintending the making of highways, and the foundation of work-shops for the poor, as well as all other objects which the King might see fit to intrust to the said assembly." The assembly was to hold a session of a month or more every two years; the suffrages were to be counted by poll, and not by order;¹ and the King was to communicate his wishes to it by one or two commissioners. In the interval of the sessions, a bureau of administration was to superintend all the details relative to the apportionment and levy of the taxes, etc., in conformity with the deliberations of the assembly, to which it was to be accountable. The assembly or its bureau could prescribe no expenditure without the King's permission. The King was to permit the assembly and the bureau to make to him such remonstrances and propositions as they believed just and useful, without thereby subjecting the apportionment and recovery of the taxes established, or to be established, to any obstacle or delay. The intendant of the province could take cognizance of the deliberations of the assembly and the bureau whenever he deemed proper. The definitive manner of proceeding in the election of the assembly was to be regulated subsequently: for the first time, the King was to appoint sixteen persons, who were to propose thirty-two others for his Majesty's approbation.²

By the definitive regulation, the number of members was modified: the clergy formed only one-fifth, instead of one-fourth; and it was decreed that the assembly should be partially reorganized according to its own choice, subject to the approval of the King.

We see how far distant these assemblies, founded on the distinction between the three orders, were from the *municipalities* of Turgot, in which the members would have figured only by the title of citizen land-owners.

It was Necker's intention to apply successively to all France the

¹ This was already the *double representation of the Third Estate*, which was to reappear on a more solemn occasion in 1789.

² *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 354.

experiment attempted in Berry, and to transfer the administration of the taxes and the local interests from the hands of the intendants and their sub-delegates to the more or less direct representatives of the tax-payers. The innovation, lame and incomplete as it was, was generally well received. Men saw with joy the weakening of the régime of intendants, — that great machine of universal despotism and subjugation.

The assembly of Berry rendered some service: it obtained the substitution, for the *corvée*, of an increase in the villain-tax and the capitation-tax. This was not so good as the measure of Turgot: it was not equality of taxation; but it was better than the *corvée*. The generalities of Grenoble, Montauban, and Moulins, also solicited and obtained provincial assemblies (April 27, July 11, 1779; March 19, 1780). Another generality, apparently through the organ of the very persons designated by the government, refused the provincial assembly which was offered it; because this purely consultative assembly derogated from the right of the citizens to vote the taxes. It is said that in some provinces, on the contrary, the notables chosen by the government declared, that, if any disturbance to public order resulted from the concessions granted by the King, these concessions would be revoked.¹ This timidity was very exceptional in the spirit of the times.

The institution of provincial assemblies could not precisely *disturb public order*, but might cause embarrassments and dissensions if the general assembly of Turgot were not adopted. It was certain that the provincial administrations, not being brought face to face with each other in a great assembly, would weary the government with their complaints, each with the aim of relieving its constituents at the expense of the neighboring provinces; and that the King would not know to which to listen.

During the closing months of 1780, embarrassments far more imminent crowded upon Necker. His happy vein with respect to loans seemed exhausted. He had obtained during the whole year but twenty-one millions, and even this through the medium and by the guarantee of the *pays d'États*; and saw himself compelled to borrow one hundred and fifty-five millions of the receipts of the ensuing eight years, the worst of all kinds of loans.² Public opinion wavered, and credit was exhausted. Necker re-

¹ Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, pp. 252, 253.

² The expenditures for 1780 amounted to 651,848,000 fr. — Bailli, *Hist. financière*, t. II. p. 233.

gained the one and revived the other by a great stroke. He demonstrated to the King that confidence and publicity were inseparable; and that, as soon as loans were made the principal resource, it became necessary to reveal, or at least partly to unfold to the eyes of the public, that *secret of the finances* hitherto concealed with such jealous care in the portfolios of the comptroller-generalship.¹ In short, he obtained from Louis XVI. permission to publish the celebrated *Official Report of the Finances* (January, 1781).

The effect was prodigious. The nation, which had hitherto been alike ignorant "of the amount of subsidies which it furnished to the crown, the relation of the expenditures to the annual receipts of the treasury, and the sum of the extraordinary engagements contracted by the State,"²—the nation saluted with a cry of rejoicing the appearance of this light in the fiscal darkness. It felt itself progressing through publicity to liberty. It applauded the moral and philanthropic views displayed by the author of the *Official Report*, with some ostentation, but with sincerity. It accepted with entire faith all the figures and results,—the promised extinction of a great part of the pensions, that of the life-*rentes*; the new plans of economy announced; the project of transforming the salt-taxes, so monstrously unequal, into a uniform tax on salt; and of abolishing the internal customs.³ It ratified the praises which Necker did not spare himself, by marvelling that the receipts had reached the point of exceeding the ordinary expenditures eighteen millions.⁴ The very abuses acknowledged by the *Official Report*; the twenty-eight millions expended in pensions,—a sum double that employed for the same purpose by all the kings of Europe together; the inequality of the burdens among the provinces; and the exorbitance of certain superfluous expenses,—redoubled the public confidence. Since the government did not fear to open such irregularities to the public gaze, it was resolved to correct them.

¹ Even this was not all. Bailli shows clearly indeed, in his *Hist. financière* (t. II. p. 235), that the comptrollers-general themselves were very imperfectly acquainted with the real state of the receipts and payments each year, the *exact statements* not being attained until several years had expired.

² Bailli, t. II. p. 234.

³ Necker attacked by sound arguments the economic system of a single tax on real estate, and eulogized indirect taxes, as being those the least felt by the consumer; an argument often since repeated.

⁴ And even more than twenty-seven millions, counting seventeen millions of reimbursements from the ordinary receipts. — *Compte rendu*, p. 13.

Credit was fully retrieved; every purse was opened, and in a few months, a few weeks, Necker obtained loans to the amount of two hundred and thirty-six millions, — almost as much as he had realized during the preceding four years.

It was the apogee of his fortune. The apogee was not far from the decline.

The *Official Report*, it must be acknowledged, was by no means what it was believed to be by those little familiar with financial questions; that is, almost every one. It was by no means the exact exposition of the aggregate receipts and expenditures, the active and passive forces, of the State. In the first place, the extraordinary charges of the war and the financial arrangements for the service of the armies were not indicated therein; an omission which may be excused by very plausible reasons. Neither was there any thing concerning the floating debt, or the arrears due. Secondly, the detailed statement of the finances did not comprise the total revenue, amounting to about four hundred and thirty millions, but only the two hundred and sixty-four millions paid into and disbursed by the treasury; the remaining one hundred and sixty-six millions being paid into different funds, the operations of which were imperfectly known to the minister himself. This was not Necker's fault: he had, on the contrary, as we have shown, taken the necessary measures to change this state of things, and these measures were in process of execution. Thirdly, with respect to the part of the taxes paid directly into the treasury, the *Official Report* did not even offer the special balance-sheet for the year 1781, which was just opening. It only gave a kind of abstract average of the ordinary receipts and expenditures, applicable to no year in particular, omitting the circumstances peculiar to the current receipts and expenditures: for instance, from one hundred and nineteen millions paid into the treasury by the receivers-general in ordinary years, Necker did not deduct eleven millions, which, in 1781, did not reach the treasury, but were applied to extraordinary expenses. In like manner, he did not deduct certain funds consumed in advance, and not received this year. His statement of the excess of the receipts over the expenditures was therefore purely fictitious, and related only to a normal state which could not return, and which did not, indeed, return by the act of others. "In short, the *Official Report* was a very ingenious work, which appeared to prove much, and which proved nothing."¹

¹ Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 297.

It was not, however, the inaccuracies or illusions of the *Official Report* that destroyed Necker, but the truths contained in this work, and the useful reforms announced by it.

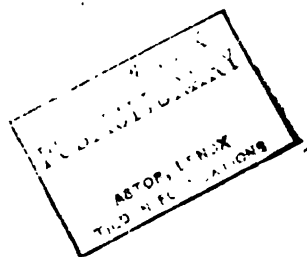
At the beginning, Necker had had against him only the clergy and the economists. Since that time, in proportion as he made a conquest of that *public opinion*, that disinterested opinion to which he unceasingly appealed, he had made at each step a new class of enemies,—the great administrative families, the Council of State, by the suppression of the offices of intendants of finance and of commerce, and by those provincial administrations which threatened the despotism of the intendants of the provinces; the financiers, by the reformation of the farms, the abolition of a host of financial offices, and the preference given to the bankers over the old revenue-farmers; the great officers of the crown, by the abolition of all those subaltern sinecures which were within their jurisdiction, and in which they trafficked; a multitude of other great nobles, by the threat suspended over the pensions, the reclamation of the royal domains which had been alienated by favor, and the project of abolishing the tolls on the highways and rivers; the other ministers, Castries and Ségur excepted, by jealousy, personal rivalry, or attachment to the ancient institutions which he overthrew; the brothers of the King, because he did not open the public funds unreservedly to their cupidity or prodigality, and because he did not submit to the domineering selfishness of the one, and the caprices of the other. The league which had overthrown Turgot was formed anew against his rival, but was less complete. The Queen no longer belonged to it, and the Queen was now a power; and the intimate friends of the Queen, treated with consideration by the director of finance, sustained him against the rest of the court.¹ The hostility of the clergy was neither very violent nor unanimous: not only was Necker supported by the political and philosophical prelates, but the aged Beaumont, so fierce against the Jansenists and the infidels, had suffered himself to be gained over by this Protestant philanthropist and his charitable wife; and a motive equally honorable on both sides, zeal for beneficent institutions, had produced friendly relations between the director of finance and the archbishop, which

¹ "The malversations of the great nobles who are at the head of the expenses of the King's household are enormous and revolting. Necker has in his favor the degradation in which the great nobles have fallen; which is such, assuredly, that they are not to be dreaded, and that their opinion does not deserve to be taken into consideration in any political speculation." — *Mém. de Besenval*. This was the opinion of the circle of the Queen, expressed by a member of this circle, which was severe only towards the abuses by which others profited.



MR. LE BON DE BEZENVAL.

after a portrait by Boucher



greatly astonished Paris. As to the parliaments, they had ceased to be friendly since Necker had manifested the design of reëstablishing equality, that is, equity, in the collection of the twentieths;¹ and since they had been able to foresee in him an adversary to privileges, although very timid in comparison with Turgot.

The autumn of 1780 had seen war seriously declared between Necker and Maurepas, whose malignant frivolity knew how to be persevering when the defence of his position was in question. Necker, at first, had the advantage. The *Official Report* marked the limit of his success. The King, assailed with a shower of remonstrances, criticisms, and pamphlets, which found access to him in all forms, began to be dismayed at what he had suffered to be done, and asked himself whether he were not really drifting towards the ruin of the monarchy by revealing the *secret of the finances*, and encroaching on the administrative system of Richelieu and Louis XIV. Vergennes seconded Maurepas' epigrams by heavy *Memorials to the King*, which expressed the quintessence of absolutism, and manifested the illusions which still lulled the men of the past. In these he strove to demonstrate the danger of leaving "the most delicate branch of the administration of the kingdom in the hands of a foreigner, a republican, and a Protestant. There is no longer either clergy, nobility, or Third Estate, in France: the distinction is fictitious, and without real authority. *The monarch speaks: all are the people, and all obey.* M. Necker does not appear satisfied with this happy condition. He has entered into a struggle between the régime of France and the régime of M. Necker." Vergennes concluded very adroitly by representing to the King as a grave offence the pretension set forth by Necker of founding credit on the morality of the minister of finance, and not on the royal word.²

During the interval, another *memorial*, in an opposite direction, that which Necker had presented to the King in 1778 to persuade him to establish the provincial administrations, was printed clandestinely by Maurepas. The spirit of this document showed that the fears of Vergennes concerning Necker's pretended *republicanism* were very chimerical; but, at the same time, the

¹ The parliament of Rouen had resisted the modifications of the twentieths with an obstinacy which had been even carried to resignation in a body; an act so harshly prohibited in the edict reëstablishing the parliaments. This resignation, however, resulted in nothing. — See *Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, by Floquet, t. VII. p. 63. The parliament of Grenoble had also made much noise.

² See the memorials in Soulavie, *règne de Louis XVI.*, t. IV. pp. 149, 206.

ideas and expressions of the director of finance were of a nature to exasperate his adversaries, and to rouse the part of the magistracy that still hesitated. On the one hand, he uttered maxims of absolutism like Vergennes, but of absolutism employed in the service of progress. "It is the power of *enforcing*," he said, "which essentially constitutes sovereign greatness;" thus erecting into a principle that royal arbitrary power which had always been contested in law, although submitted to in fact. On the other hand, after stigmatizing the *confused, oppressive, almost ridiculous*, régime of intendants, he attacked the parliaments, "like all bodies that wish to acquire power by speaking in the name of the people. . . . Although they are strong neither in instruction, nor in the love of the good of the State, they will always show themselves on every occasion, so long as they believe themselves supported by public opinion. It is necessary to deprive them of this support. . . . It is necessary to remove the great objects of administration from the continual scrutiny of the magistracy . . . by an institution, which, while answering the national wishes, equally suits the government (the provincial assemblies)." ¹

It may be judged what a tempest was raised in the parliament by this revelation, due to an abuse of confidence. The impetuous D'Éprémesnil broke forth in furious declamations, and graver magistrates proposed to issue a writ, for treason to the laws of the State, against the magistrate who conspired the abolition of parliamentary registration. "Louis XVI. was forced to tell the first president that a memorial designed for the King alone could not be the object of the inquiries of the parliament. This body indemnified itself by refusing to register the edict creating a provincial assembly (that of Moulins), and by ordering remonstrances to be drawn up against this mode of administration." ²

Necker, attacked passionately by some, and treacherously by others, took the offensive like a man of courage. In the position in which he was placed, a striking mark of the King's confidence was indispensable to him. His plans were thwarted and mutilated in the royal council in his absence. He requested the right of admission to the council, which implied the rank of min-

¹ See Necker's memorial, ap. Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. IV. p. 121, with the remarks of Louis XVI. The King showed himself therein very hesitating, very timid; inclining strongly to the ancient forms, and less sure than Necker of the absolute right of enforcing his authority. He dared not accept the idea of blotting out the *pays d'États* and their gratuities by the uniform régime of provincial administrations.

² Dros, t. I. p. 300.

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高麗之相，一而可以見其相也。

ister of State. The King hesitated. Maurepas prevailed, and persuaded him to reply to Necker that he should enter the council if he would abjure the errors of Calvin. Law had done so in a like juncture; but, to a man of Necker's character, such a proposal was an insult. Necker confined himself to demanding that the director of finance should have the inspection of the purchases for the army and navy, and that the edict creating the provincial administration of Bourbonnais should be registered by letters of jussion. He was again refused.¹ He had filled the coffers by his new loans. The expenses of the administration were insured for a whole year. It was thought possible to be ungrateful without peril. Necker did not deem that he could retain his post with honor: May 19, 1781, he tendered his resignation to the King. The Queen sent for him, and vainly strove to shake his resolution. As to Louis XVI., weary of Necker as he had been of Turgot, not only did he receive his resignation with pleasure, but he was exceedingly piqued at the unusual form of the note in which the minister had offered his resignation, written on small-sized paper, *without formal address or title*; and this infraction of etiquette contributed not a little to close the way to Necker's return to power.²

Among the middle ranks of the population, and the large minority of the higher classes who seconded the reformatory movement, the fall of Necker was felt as a public calamity. The effect was much greater than at the time of the disgrace of Turgot, who had just died, at the age of fifty-four,³ happy in not being condemned to see that society, which had been unwilling to be saved by him, swallowed up in blood and tears. Public opinion had developed greatly during five years, and a far greater number of men took an active interest in public affairs: a less evil, therefore, produced a much stronger impression. The attitude of Necker's friends and enemies attested the immense progress made by the middle classes, become the true France. The official world dared not triumph aloud: the clamor of Paris, responded

¹ According to Madame Campan (*Mémoires*, t. I. p. 263), Maurepas committed a forgery on Necker, as lately on Turgot. He perverted a letter from Necker to the King, in such a manner as to render it indecorous in the sight of Louis XVI.

² Soultavie, t. IV. p. 217. The note read as follows: "The conversation which I have had with M. de Maurepas no longer permits me to delay placing my resignation in the hands of the King. This is heart-rending to me. I venture to hope that his Majesty will deign to preserve some remembrance of the years of happy but painful labor, and, above all, of boundless zeal, which I have devoted to his service."

³ March 20, 1781.

to by the provinces, was too violent. It would not have been prudent to express a feeling of joy in the streets or in public places. With the philosophers and the bourgeoisie, a part of the court flocked to the residence of the fallen minister, — that château of Saint-Ouen where one of the authors of the fall of Necker, the brother of Louis XVI., was, thirty-three years after, to appropriate to himself the principles which he now opposed. The Orleanses, the Condés, and even the aged Richelieu and the Archbishop of Paris, appeared at Saint-Ouen in strange conjunction. Foreign countries joined in the chorus with France. England rejoiced in no longer having to cope with the great finder of millions. Joseph II. and the Czarina testified their high esteem to Necker: it only belonged to himself to administer the finances of Russia. He was unwilling to quit France: he expected that necessity would bring back the King to him, and his confidence in himself persuaded him that he would not have long to wait. This return, however, did not take place till the end of seven years; and, when Louis again endured rather than recalled Necker, it was too late for both.

Had Necker been patient, the King would not, perhaps, have decided to remove him; and Maurepas, who terminated his fatal career a few months after (September 21, 1781), would have left him the place free. It is not probable that Vergennes would have been strong enough to overthrow him. Necker, maintained in the ministry, would have postponed for a little time the catastrophe towards which the government was drifting; but he would have only postponed it: he had neither the character nor the views to prevent it, admitting prevention to have been possible; and, had he had them, the King would have abandoned him like Turgot.

Whatever may be said of his vanity and weaknesses, Necker was one of the very few politicians who have loved power as a means, and not as an end, and who have always identified their personal ambition with the general interest. This suffices for the honor of his memory.¹

A counsellor of State, Joli de Fleuri, was summoned, despite himself, to the perilous inheritance of Necker. He aspired to the ministry of justice. The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, urged him for the finances, in order to compromise him thereby, and no

¹ Among the plans of improvements which disappeared with him is remarked that of indemnifying the victims of judicial errors, the citizens accused unjustly. — Soulavie, t. IV. p. 184. Necker also knew the sadness of Turgot, — the sadness of the statesman who sees the good of a people wrested from his hands!

longer to have to fear his rivalry elsewhere. Maurepas forced him to accept. He took merely the title of councillor of the royal council of finance; did not install himself in the hôtel of the comptroller-generalship; and affected to set himself up as the admirer and continuer of Necker, whom he visited in his popular retirement at Saint-Ouen. This is the strongest possible proof of the power which had been gained by public opinion. Joli de Fleuri secretly thought the reverse of what he manifested openly; but he felt the impossibility of maintaining credit, should he avow himself the adversary of Necker's system.

If the reaction was disguised in the finances, it had just been revealed elsewhere by a stroke of inconceivable madness. A regulation decided upon in spite of the minister of war, M. de Ségur, three days after the fall of Necker (May 22, 1781), decreed that every candidate proposed for the rank of second lieutenant must thenceforth furnish proofs of noble descent for four generations on the father's side, unless he were the son of a knight of St. Louis! All the bourgeoisie in easy circumstances, all the sons of families not of noble birth, but *living like nobles*, — that is, living by their landed estates or by liberal professions, — and even the offspring of grand-parents ennobled within the past century, thus found themselves excluded from the army, unless they began by shouldering the musket like common soldiers; a condition which, according to the mode of the formation of the army, was viewed in quite a different light from what it has been since 1792. In other words, the army was made, after Voltaire and Rousseau, much more feudal than under Louis XIV., and even than at the time of its creation in the fifteenth century. Neither Chevert nor the sons of the ministers of Louis XIV. could have been second lieutenants in 1781;¹ any more, besides, than Bossuet or Massillon could have been bishops: for it was with mitres as with epaulets, although no official regulation was made thereon. The King was determined to make benefices, from the most modest priory to the richest abbey and the episcopal cross, the exclusive appanage of the nobility.²

¹ Before, military rank was reputed to be reserved for men of noble birth; but the government contented itself with certificates of compliance, and every man *living like a nobleman* was admitted without difficulty. — See the regulation, ap. *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVII. p. 29. The following year, the minister of the marine, Castries, made a worthy protest against it by causing experienced merchant-captains to be received into the royal navy, according to the plan of Choiseul. — See *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. p. 460.

² See curious details in the *Mém. de madame Campan*, t. II. p. 236.

The monarchy could not have dealt itself a severer blow. It at once exasperated the whole bourgeoisie and a formidable class of the army, the subaltern officers, who felt that they were about to be immured, in point of fact, in their humble condition, although the exception was not abolished by law which rendered them eligible to promotion from the ranks. Bourgeois and sergeants remembered the offence offered to the commonalty when they joined hands at the foot of the Bastille.

On the same day of the appointment of M. de Fleuri to the finances (May 25), the second edition of the *Philosophical History of the Two Indies*, by the Abbé Rainal, an edition bolder than the first, and published under the name of the author, was condemned by the parliament. Rainal was forced to quit France. The Sorbonne had recently wished to attack Buffon on account of his last masterpiece, the *Epochs of Nature*; and the court had been obliged to interfere to cause the illustrious old man to be left in peace. The assembly of the clergy, in 1780, had renewed its complaints against tolerance, and its demands for the persecution of the philosophers and the Protestants, and had solicited of the King a new law for the suppression of the abuse of *the art of writing*.¹ The powers of the past revived their pretensions, at moments, with the passion of rebellious decay, and passed by turns from syncope to paroxysms of anger.

It could soon be seen that the spirit of Necker no longer presided over the finances. Joli de Fleuri created no new provincial assemblies; restricted the existing ones as much as possible; increased all the indirect imposts, salt-taxes, tolls, and duties, two sous per livre: a very unjust proportion; for it caused the greater part of the new charge to fall on those already the most heavily burdened, instead of beginning by reëstablishing equality among private individuals, and among the provinces and communes (August, 1781). "This was administering in the fashion of Terrai," says M. Droz, very truly. A large number of the fiscal

¹ Soularie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 136. The clergy admitted that it was impossible to apply the law of 1757, which decreed the penalty of death against irreligious writers. It demanded penalties *less severe*, but more strictly applied, — fines, exclusion from office and from the privileges of citizens, and perpetual imprisonment for incorrigible offenders; for booksellers, the loss of their license; the abolition or extreme restriction of the peddling of books, and the grant of an inquisitorial inspection of *bad books* to the clergy jointly with the civil authority. We shall speedily recur to what concerned the Protestants. The piety of Louis XVI. was by no means fanatical, and he had the wisdom at least not to enter the path into which the clergy sought to draw him. His notes on the *Remonstrances* are full of good sense.

offices suppressed by Necker soon reappeared with the privileges attached to them (October, 1781-January, 1782).

Maurepas died meanwhile (November 21, 1781). The King's regret for the loss of his *old friend* attested his good heart and his lack of intelligence. No one wholly replaced the fatal Mentor of the King; but Vergennes obtained the most important place in the confidence of Louis XVI., who made him chief of the council of finance in the place of Maurepas. Vergennes took another step towards the position of prime minister by inducing the King to establish a committee of finance, composed only of the chief of the council of finance, the keeper of the seals, and the comptroller-general, to which the other ministers were accountable (February, 1783). He went no farther: his ambition had not energy enough to attain the end; and he would not have known what to do with the supreme power had he obtained it.

Fleuri continued to increase the taxes. He established in July, 1782, a third *twentieth*, estimated at twenty-one millions,¹ which was to last three years after peace. The proceeds of the two sous per livre were estimated at thirty millions. He undertook to continue the system of loans simultaneously with the increase of taxes by presenting this augmentation of the revenues as a guarantee to the lenders. He succeeded at first, to a certain point, and borrowed, from his entrance into public affairs to the end of 1781, one hundred and ninety millions, on less favorable conditions, it is true, than his predecessor. The parliament of Paris registered every thing, in its satisfaction at the dismissal of Necker. Joli de Fleuri, sprung from one of the principal parliamentary families, was personally on the best terms with the company, and had accepted the direction of the finances only by the entreaty of the leaders of the parliament. The provincial parliaments showed themselves less docile. That of Franche-Comté placed restrictions on the edict levying two sous per livre, and did not register the third twentieth till the end of the war. The Governor of Franche-Comté, by the King's command, authoritatively enforced the registration. The parliament declared the registration null and void, and forbade the collection of the new taxes under penalty of extortion. The scenes of the times of Louis XV. were repeated. The parliament of Franche-Comté waged a warfare of decrees against the council, resuming the old tactics of separating the King's will from that of the agents of the King. It

¹ Manufactures, and offices and duties, were exempted from this new twentieth.

demanding the convocation of the Provincial Estates and that of the STATES-GENERAL. The proposition to send the decree containing this demand to the parliaments, the princes, and the peers, was rejected by a majority of five. The HOUR had not yet come; but it was approaching. The quarrel ended in a compromise.

Proud Brittany was also beginning to be restive. Her States, in 1782, repeated their energetic protests against the strange injunction to elect, as the deputies charged with watching over their affairs at court, none but men *recommended* by the governor of their province.¹ They resolved to vote no subsidies unless the King consented to receive a deputation commissioned to set forth to him their rights. The King received the deputies, and, instead of listening to them, enjoined on them obedience, declaring that there was nothing in his orders contrary to the privileges which "his predecessors had been pleased to grant to his province of Brittany." The States replied by a letter almost republican: "Our franchises are a contract, and not a privilege. . . . Your Majesty has sworn to observe our laws and our constitution. . . . The conditions which insure our obedience to you are positive laws."

The nobility sustained this haughty language with more vigor than the other two orders, which did not proceed from an inferiority of energy in the bourgeoisie, but from the undemocratic manner in which the representation of the Third Estate was elected. The nobility opposed any deliberation on the subsidies claimed by the King until the States had recovered their independence. The governor introduced troops into Rennes, in violation of the laws which prohibited the military force from approaching within ten leagues of the city where the States of Brittany were in session. By intrigue, still more than by menace, the Governor and the Bishop of Rennes succeeded at length in gaining over the more needy portion of the nobility. The majority submitted: a hundred gentlemen persisted in their protest.²

Every thing was inconsistent in Louis XVI. He was terrified when his ministers proposed to him to change the ancient forms for the purpose of realizing necessary reforms; and, at the same time, he violated the old laws by arbitrary caprices, exactly

¹ The collection of the *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXIV. p. 355, contains a decree of the council annulling a resolution of the States of Brittany because they had appointed, for the orders of the nobility and the Third Estate, other deputies than those recommended by the governor (1776). The second order of the clergy of Brittany (the lower clergy) protested with great energy against another decree, of November 4, 1780, which excluded it from the deputation. — *Mémoires secrets*, t. XVII. p. 27.

² Droz, t. I. pp. 386-390.

as his grandfather might have done, without knowing how to be decidedly either despotic, reformatory, or conservative.

Symptoms of agitation appeared in the most unlike conditions. In Provence and Dauphiny, it was the lower clergy that were restless. The poor curés with slender stipends assembled to frame their complaints, and to appoint syndics and deputies. Those of the diocese of Vienne "caused memorials to be printed, contrary to the respect due to the bishops, their superiors," said the royal declaration which prohibited their assemblage (March 9, 1782).

The war, meanwhile, had ended, very opportunely for the minister of finance, who felt the resource of loans failing, and confidence becoming withdrawn from him in proportion as the public discerned more clearly that he was really hostile to reforms. Joli de Fleuri wished, nevertheless, to economize after his fashion. In accordance with Vergennes and the keeper of the seals, who composed, in conjunction with him, the new committee of finance, he caused the treasury to be authorized, by decree of the council, to suspend the payment of letters of exchange coming from the colonies. This was violating public faith towards those colonists who had contributed so much to the success of the war, and mistaking bankruptcy for economy. The minister of the marine was indignant that his name should have been put to such a measure without consulting him. Joli de Fleuri recriminated concerning the expenses of the marine, as Necker had lately done against Sartine, and talked of *malversation*. The proud and upright Castries was not, however, a Sartine: he gave Fleuri such rude thrusts, that Vergennes dared not sustain the latter. Fleuri tendered his resignation; thus escaping, without much regret, the immense embarrassments which he foresaw (March, 1783).

The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, with Vergennes' consent, caused Fleuri to be succeeded by another counsellor of State, D'Ormesson, who accepted the office tremblingly. "Sire, I am very young," said he to the King, on thanking him for so difficult a post. "I am younger than you," replied Louis; "and I fill a greater place than that which I give you."¹

The misfortune of both was not youth, but incapacity. The laborious probity of D'Ormesson could not make up for lack of strength and breadth of mind. The new comptroller-general struggled against the cupidity of the courtiers, and resisted the King's brothers, who, not content with their enormous appanages, undertook to make the State pay their debts; but he was only

¹ Monthion, *Ministres des finances*, p. 272.

fit for passive resistance to evil, where the boldest and most enterprising genius was needed. He soon quarrelled with Vergennes, in consequence of a quarrel between the latter and Miromesnil. Vergennes undermined him with the King, who purchased Rambouillet for fourteen millions from the Duke de Penthièvre, without saying a word concerning it to the minister of finance. Louis, so economical in his private life, was seized in turn with the madness that surrounded him. D'Ormesson wished to respond to this lack of confidence by tendering his resignation. His wife opposed it with tears. He remained, and lost the opportunity of an honorable retreat, to meet, a few days after, a heavy and legitimate fall. His attempts to borrow had failed: not knowing where to find money, he lost his presence of mind, and plunged headlong into arbitrary measures. He annulled the lease of the farms, so well regulated by Necker, without any pretext, and placed the farms under the direct administration of the government. Shortly before, he had compelled the bank of discount, created by Turgot, and preserved and enlarged by Necker, secretly to lend six millions to the treasury. The secret transpired. The holders of the notes flocked in a crowd to the bank. It was unable to redeem them.¹ D'Ormesson authorized it to suspend the specie payment of its notes over three hundred livres for three months, and made the notes a legal tender. The panic spread; money became scarce; and the payment of the arrears of the *rentes* was well-nigh suspended.

It was impossible to retain D'Ormesson. Castries, in an urgent memorial, conjured the King to recall Necker, insisting that Necker alone could make the public accept the taxes after the loans, and that, with any one else, the disorder would evidently go on, from step to step, to a general bankruptcy.² The King replied, that, "after the manner in which Necker had quitted him," he could no longer employ the ex-minister. He was addressed in the name of the safety of his State: he answered by a puerile susceptibility of feeling.

Necker set aside, Foulon was called into question; a personage detested by the populace of Paris, who had a terrible fate in store for him.³ His reputation was such, that this would have been styled the revival of the Terrai ministry. Foulon was not admit-

¹ Its administrators had employed the greater part of its specie in operations foreign to its true design; which was the reason that six millions sufficed to drain it. — See *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 221.

² See the memorial in Soulavie, t. IV. p. 274.

³ Ex-intendant of finance, massacred after the taking of the Bastille.

ted. The King also rejected the Archbishop of Toulouse, the ambitious and restless Loménie de Brienne.¹ Louis did not like prelates, especially prelates *who did not believe in God*, as he says himself.

An intrigue conducted by Vergennes, with the coöperation of the friends of the Queen and the Count d'Artois, caused the King to accept a third candidate, the intendant of Valenciennes, one of the most brilliant of men, but certainly the most disreputable man in the administration, — that CALONNE who had signalized himself by such effrontery in the La Chalotais affair, and who had not assuredly since become more moral. To take Calonne, after removing Turgot and Necker, was to act like a sick man in the last extremity who calls in an audacious charlatan after dismissing his physicians (November 2, 1783).²

Before summing up this ministry of the death-struggle of the monarchy, we will cast our eyes for a moment on the state of manners and ideas in the last days that preceded the great catastrophe. We have fathomed and analyzed, so far as it depended on us, the moral origin of the new world which commenced in 1789. Our narrative stops on the threshold of this world. It remains for us to point out the last modifications which separated the incubation from the bursting, Voltaire and Rousseau from the Revolution, — modifications, the most important of which consisted in a mystical movement, very unexpected on the morrow of Voltaire and the *Encyclopædia*.

It does not belong to our plan to enter into the anecdotal history of the court of Louis XVI. Events have already sufficiently brought upon the stage this unhappy monarch, capable of

¹ Brienne did not aspire to the title of comptroller-general, which was incompatible with his vocation, but to admission into the council, where he would have kept a firm rule over the finances, through his economic and administrative knowledge.

² The contrast between public opinion and the government became more and more manifest. During the ministry of D'Ormesson, a decree of the council, June 24, 1783, had granted new encouragement to the *slave-trade*, and this at the moment when the abolition of slavery was beginning to enter into, not only the vague hopes, but the positive projects, of advanced minds; when La Fayette, in his voyage in 1784, expressed this wish to the Southern United States, and undertook an experiment at his own expense, at Cayenne, for the gradual emancipation of the negroes, with the applause of Washington. "Would to God," wrote this illustrious friend to him, "that a like spirit might animate all the people of this country! . . . I believe that a sudden emancipation would be productive of great evils; but certainly it could and should be gradually accomplished by legislative authority." — Letter of May 10, 1786, ap. *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 157. The wish of Washington, realized elsewhere, is unhappily far from accomplishment in the country of this great man; and America may pay dearly for not having listened to him [written in 1860].

comprehending, incapable of willing; incapable of securing to himself the merit of his good intentions, and carrying them into effect; destined to reject or to let go, one after another, every firm hand that was stretched out to save him, and inevitably to turn the people from disappointed expectation to anger, and from confidence to hatred. We have also endeavored to sketch the portrait of that unfortunate Marie-Antoinette, who, ill received upon her arrival in France by the public, to whom she was the pledge of the unpopular Austrian alliance, and successively pursued by the calumnies of the D'Aiguillons and the Du Barris, the secret intrigues of the Count de Provence and the circle of the Count d'Artois,¹ and the passionate rancor of the Duke de Chartres, seemed to make it her task unceasingly to furnish new weapons to this hatred by a mode of life which was nothing but a perpetual imprudence; who saw, without knowing how to defend herself, and almost without being moved by it, her giddiness transformed into crime, and her weakness into infamy, and not only faults sought in all her relations with the other sex, but monstrous vices in her female friendships; who fell, at last, into utter disrepute, and, if not irreproachable, at least less worthy of reproach than most of the ladies of the court, acquired, without deserving it, the reputation deserved by her abominable sister, Caroline of Naples.²

The Queen was decried and derided; yet her habits, her tastes, and her follies, were imitated. A dressmaker, admitted to the apartments of Marie-Antoinette, to the great stupefaction of all who retained any veneration for etiquette, Mademoiselle Bertin, became an historic personage. Her influence shook the whole system of our ancient manufactures by completing the revolution commenced by Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barri, and substituting a light, frivolous, and fantastic elegance for the heavy magnificence of the old fabrics. Sometimes the Queen, and, after her, all the fashionable beauties, affected an extreme simplicity, and assumed the simple white dress of their waiting-

¹ We say, *the circle*; for the Count d'Artois himself, capable of speeches which were more than light, was by no means capable of a malignant and treacherous plot.

² The nightly promenades on the terrace of Versailles, the nocturnal festivals at Trianon, and the freaks at the Opera ball, do not appear to have concealed the mysteries which malevolence has sought to discover therein. Madame Campan, especially, has justified the Queen in a plausible manner on this point and on others. The *debaucheries* of Marie-Antoinette are imaginary. It does not belong to history to decide concerning the two *attachments* which were attributed to her at a few years' interval. — See, but with reservations, the *Mém. du comte de Tilly*.

maids ; sometimes they muffled themselves in theatrical costumes and immense plumes, and built up on their heads a gigantic scaffolding of gauze, flowers, and feathers, so that the head of a woman appeared in the middle of her body, as was depicted in the caricatures of the times, and every circle had the air of a burlesque fancy-ball.

The drawing-rooms laughed at the fashion while obeying it : the artisans exclaimed that *the Austrian woman* was ruining our Lyons manufactories, our beautiful silk manufactures, to enrich the manufactories of Brabançon lawn, and the subjects of her brother, Joseph II.¹

Every one, moreover, artisans, bourgeois, and even courtiers, agreed in clamoring against the intimate circle of the Queen, the Polignacs and their friends, who formed, as it were, a small court within the great one,—the courtiers, because they were jealous of the members of this little favored circle ; the other classes, because they fancied that they discovered therein the source of all bad counsels and the point of support of all abuses,—an exaggerated prejudice ; for this circle, governed by petty interests and short-sighted passions, did good and harm by turns, without any general views. An incident will show with what gravity it treated politics. One of the members of the circle, the Count d'Adhémar, a very insignificant person, had the misfortune to be tiresome to the Queen. Marie-Antoinette could find no better means of ridding herself of him than to cause him to be sent as ambassador to London.²

The majority of the nation was not less hostile to the court than to the friends of the Queen, and to the nobility in general than to the court. The bourgeoisie commented with bitterness upon the statistics of the *Official Report*, the amount of the pensions, the expenses of the court, and the princely appanages,—statistics which had become a condemnation since they had ceased to be a promise of reform ; and was still more violently irritated at the too celebrated ordinance on military grades. As to the peasantry, the abolition and almost immediate reëstablishment of the *corvée*, and the idea of abolishing the feudal tributes and

¹ France herself had very flourishing manufactories of lawn in her northern provinces, which declined only by the invasion of cotton cloths.

² *Mém. de madame Campan*, t. I. p. 265. It is true that Madame Campan says that the Queen afterwards reproached herself for this frivolity. According to Madame Campan, it was from 1783 that the influence of the Polignacs became wholly injurious, and that they more and more deeply compromised the name of the Queen in intrigues in which she often had the responsibility without the complicity.

the salt-tax, thrown out amidst the experiments of Turgot, had carried the agitation into the humblest cottages. The sluggish and heavy masses of the rural districts were restless, in the secret expectation of the speedy appearance of that day of reparation; that day of judgment on the earth, so often invoked in vain by their sires in the mystical insurrections of the Middle Ages, and at last about to dawn. The rural districts were ready to follow as soon as the bourgeoisie should have given the signal.

That absorbing covetousness of the nobility, which excited the anger of the bourgeoisie to so high a degree, was the inevitable result of the work of Richelieu and Louis XIV. To overthrow the seigniorial mode of life, and to attract within the shadow of the throne the great nobles transformed into courtiers, was to burden the State with the support of the petty nobility, formerly maintained in the châteaux by the great nobles; then of the latter themselves, speedily ruined or involved in debt by court life. The misalliances which had *manured* the seigniorial lands with the money of the financiers had only retarded this logical necessity, which implied pensions, pecuniary favors of all kinds, and the exclusive monopoly of military rank and ecclesiastical benefices,¹ if it was wished to preserve an hereditary nobility, often an obstacle, but always an indispensable buttress to royalty. The end of this logic was reached only on the eve of the common fall of the nobility and royalty. In other words, the Third Estate was excluded from every thing at the moment when it felt itself capable of every thing: inequality was carried to the farthest excess, at the moment when equality existed everywhere, without as within, in dress as in mind; when the Queen had effaced the last vestiges of the etiquette of Versailles; "when a duchess could no longer be distinguished from an actress;" when the great nobles, deserting the drawing-rooms of Louis XVI., strolled through Paris in frock-coats and coarse shoes, and suffered themselves to be collared in the crowd by street porters.

Every thing was inconsistent; and the height of inconsistency was personified in an incident, a name, — FIGARO, or the *Day of Folly*.

A day of folly, indeed; the last saturnalia of the ancient régime, in which those who lived by abuses, and who refused to cease to live by them, united in forcing the government to suffer the abuses to be dragged upon the stage; in which those who were sheltered by arbitrary power applauded those who were sapping its founda-

¹ Which impelled the curés, like the sergeants, to revolution.

tion ; in which the privileged classes amused themselves with the spectacle of the social hierarchy crumbling before the piercing laughter of Panurge transformed into Figaro. Beaumarchais crowned his innumerable adventures by the most daring of all. In this comedy, the work of an inferior Voltaire, who seems to have passed through the literary schools of the Italian and Spanish decline through the *conceits* and *gongorism*, instead of being, like the patriarch of Ferney, the legitimate successor of the literature of the Great Age, Beaumarchais no longer attacked a single body, as in the times of the *Maupeou parliament* : he struck all bodies, all orders, and all institutions ; he collected, concentrated, and laughingly cast upon the stage, all that had been sown gravely through so many books. Louis XVI. was not deceived by it. After listening to Beaumarchais' manuscript, "Should this piece be played," he exclaimed, "*it would be necessary to destroy the Bastille ! . . . It shall never be played !*"

It was played, notwithstanding ! The circle of the Queen, the court almost in a body, headed by the incapable and vicious great nobles, at whom Beaumarchais' sarcasms were directly levelled, the greater part of the men in office and dignities, even to the royal censors, even to the bishops, joined the pressure of their influence to the clamor of Paris. Beaumarchais prevailed over the keeper of the seals, and over the King himself. The *Marriage of Figaro*, played for the first time at the château of Genevilliers, before the Count d'Artois and the circle of the Queen, — who failed to be present only because she was ill, — made its appearance at the Théâtre Français in April, 1784. Beaumarchais himself was astounded at the immensity of a success, the full scope of which his mind, more active than profound, had not measured.¹

Beaumarchais won a second victory over ancient society by carrying out, and circulating through all France, despite the reiterated complaints of the clergy, the double edition of the complete works of Voltaire, printed at Kehl, in the territory of the Margrave of Baden. Condorcet seconded Beaumarchais in this vast enterprise, which was encouraged by the connivance of Maurepas, then of Calonne, with the same logic through which the court protected *Figaro*. The great work of Beaumarchais, increased by an edition of Rousseau commenced with less noise, filled and even exceeded the interval which separated the death

¹ The Memoirs of Madame Campan and those of Madame Vigée-Lebrun are incorrect as regards Figaro. — See *Beaumarchais et son Temps*, by M. de Loménie.

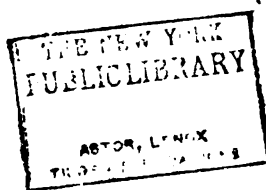
of Voltaire and Rousseau from the Revolution : commenced in 1779, it was not finished till 1790, between the taking of the Bastille and the removal of the remains of Voltaire to the Pantheon.¹

Thus, at the moment which our narrative has reached, the eighteenth century was summing up and contemplating itself in the works of its initiators before proceeding to action. Literature was no longer called upon to utter new thoughts, but to popularize the thoughts already uttered, and to circulate the testaments of the illustrious dead. The principal contemporaries of Voltaire and Rousseau successively rejoined them in the spheres beyond the grave. Condillac disappeared in 1780 ; D'Alembert, in 1783 ; Diderot, in 1784 ; then Mably, in 1785. The prophet of Nature, the great Buffon, closed the funeral train of this generation, forever famous (1788). The men of ideas seemed hastening to make way for the men of battle.

Letters, still rich in second-class talent, brought forth, therefore, no more men of genius, save a single exception,—the great writer who at times consoled the last days and who received the inheritance of Jean-Jacques ; the faithful disciple who so happily developed that religious poetry of Nature, lost from our literature, and again discovered by Rousseau ; that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who succeeded in uniting Greek beauty and Christian purity in pictures of incomparable grace and sublime simplicity, and creating an immortal type of tenderness and modesty in his *Virginia*, the most touching of masterpieces.² In short, literature was declining, a thing inevitable ; but the fine arts, as we have said elsewhere, were in turn assuming a lofty and heroic character, and the progress of the sciences was accelerated instead of becoming slackened. A magnificent impulse of discovery and creation manifested itself therein. There every void that was made was immediately filled up. D'Alembert, dying, was succeeded by Lagrange, Piedmontese by birth, and French by extraction, who was retained for twenty years at Berlin by the great Frederick ;

¹ Loménie, *Beaumarchais et son Temps*.

² Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the pretended descendant of Eustache de Saint-Pierre, born at Havre in 1737, began to write late in life, like his master Rousseau, and after having been, like him, long and cruelly buffeted by fortune. His travels in the tropical regions opened unknown sources of inspiration to his imagination, and furnished him with those rich colors which were to be abused after him. His *Études de la nature*, in which so many literary beauties and so much elevation of sentiment well redeem a bad system of physics, did not appear until 1784, and *Paul et Virginie* until 1788,—a sweet and melancholy idyl, which so closely preceded great tragedies.





Engraved by J. Goussier del.

PLATE I.

*From an original Picture by Hogarth
in the possession of the Manchester Dispensary*

Under the sanction and aid of the Society for the Extension of Useful Knowledge

London: Published by Charles Knight, Pall Mall, 1824.

then was attracted to France at the instigation of Mirabeau, a genius of another order, who had comprehended the genius of the scholar (1787). Lagrange had long been present at Paris, through his writings and correspondence, before settling there in person. No one, since Descartes and Leibnitz, had done so much to extend the sovereignty of mathematics over the natural sciences, and to direct and render universal the action of that abstract instrument, by which pure reason dictates laws to sensible objects without seeing or touching them.¹ Mathematics continued to progress, although D'Alembert and Lagrange himself had believed at times that the genius of man had reached its farthest limit. French astronomy was in all its lustre: Bailli, Lalande, and Messier were pursuing their labors. Laplace was beginning to manifest that powerful mind which was to immortalize itself in the *Celestial Mechanics*. In other branches of science, Berthollet, Monge, Fourcroy, etc., had already appeared; an imposing group, above which towered one of the great scientific figures of the modern world, the reformer, the regulator, it may be said the creator, of chemistry,—LAVOISIER.

Many secrets had already been purloined from Nature by the chemists: but they still wrought in darkness, without knowing how to distinguish from each other, by their specific characteristics, the varied and subtle elements which surround us; that is, the real elements concealed beneath the four apparent elements of the ancients. Three-fourths of the eighteenth century had been employed in the study of the *gases*.² In 1757, the Englishman

¹ From his earliest youth, he had found the elements of his method of variations, a method of calculus independent of all geometrical consideration, according to the terms of Euler. He generalized the principle of the *least action*, and applied it to the solution of all dynamic questions. He made admirable researches concerning the propagation of sound. He gained the prize of the Academy of Sciences for the theory of the *libration of the moon*, and showed therein all the general features of the principles of *virtual velocities* (1764). He gained the prize for the theory of *Jupiter's satellites*, and gave the first mathematical theory therein (1766). It is impossible to point out here his immense labors in mathematics and general astronomy. In 1776, he demonstrated that the variations of the great axes of the solar system can only be periodical; "the most beautiful discovery of physical astronomy, after that of Newton," says the learned Playfair. In 1781, he published *La Mécanique analytique*, in which, by a happy combination of D'Alembert's principle and that of *virtual velocities*, the progress of rational mechanics is made to depend alone on that of the calculus. The great theorist was to render brilliant practical services to the France of the Revolution by his participation in the establishment of the metrical system, the first Normal School, the Polytechnic School, etc.—See *Biographie universelle*, art. LAGRANGE.

² Gas, from the German *gas*, *geist*, *spirit*. It was Van Helmont that first gave it this name.

Black had discovered the elastic non-respirable fluid (carbonic-acid gas) and latent heat (which the thermometer does not indicate). In 1771, another Englishman, the illustrious Priestley, discovered the interchange of the gases between the animal and the vegetable kingdoms. About 1774, the Swede Scheele discovered the composition of atmospheric air, a mixture of three elastic fluids (carbonic acid, azote, and oxygen). The hypothesis of Stahl, the supposed existence of a substance which was the principle of combustibility, and which was believed to quit the metal when it was calcined, and to return to it when it was revived (*phlogiston*), still tyrannized over science, and prevented the discovery of the link between these beautiful discoveries and many others. Lavoisier, after long, obstinate, and costly experiments, facilitated by the lucrative position of farmer-general, which he had sought only in order to acquire the means of scientific action, and which would one day be imputed to him as a crime, — Lavoisier at length ventured to break the yoke of *phlogiston*, and to affirm that the calcination of metals is only their combination with fixed air (1772). He soon modified this first idea. In 1774, Burger having reduced the oxides of mercury, without charcoal, in impermeable vessels, Lavoisier examined the air obtained in this manner, and found it respirable. Shortly after, Priestley asserted that it was precisely the only respirable part of the atmosphere. Lavoisier immediately concluded that calcination and all the different kinds of combustion are the result of the union of this essentially respirable air with bodies; and that fixed air, in particular, is the result of the union of respirable air with charcoal. Combining this notion with the discoveries of Black and Wilke concerning latent heat, he considered the heat manifested in combustion as evolved from the respirable air, which it had been formerly employed in maintaining in the elastic state. From this double proposition proceeded the new chemical theory (1775-1777), which Lavoisier, directly or indirectly seconded by Cavendish, Monge, Meusnier, Berthollet, Guyton de Morveau, and Laplace, applied to all the modifications of bodies belonging to the different kingdoms, in a word, to all Nature, and which he generalized, after creating it, by finding words as well as things. The obsolete and obscure language of alchemy finally disappeared before a simple, logical, and luminous terminology;¹ and the *Elementary Treatise on Chemistry* (1789) showed that Lavoisier knew how to expound as well as to

¹ *Méthode de nomenclature chimique*, 1787.



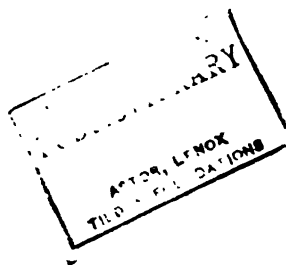
Engraved by J. Smith.

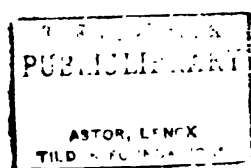
LAVOISIER.

*From the original Picture by 'David',
in a private Collection at Paris.*

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

London: Published by Charles Knight, Ludgate Street.







From the Original

LA GRANGE.

*First Coast in the History of the
Republic of France.*

Under the superintendence of the Academy for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

London: Published by Charles Knight, 149, Pall Mall East.

effect his conquests of the mysteries of Nature. "Chemistry is easy now," said Lagrange: "it is learned like algebra." Of an empirical art Lavoisier had made a mathematical science.

Foreign scholars, after a few efforts to defend the tradition of Stahl, were speedily obliged to recognize the supremacy of the new theory. France is proud of having conquered the sceptre of the science which reveals to us, so far as it is permitted to human analysis, the true principles of the material world, and which introduces man into the eternal laboratory of the hidden Isis. Another discovery, of a less general and less extended nature, but which manifested with extraordinary lustre the progress of physics, acted much more powerfully, meanwhile, on the imagination of the masses, by astonishing their eyes by an unheard-of spectacle. June 5, 1783, the separate States of Vivarais, assembled in the little town of Annonay, received from the brothers Montgolfier, the managers of a paper manufactory,¹ an invitation to witness an experiment in physics. A linen bag lined with paper, thirty-five feet in height, and inflated by an unknown process, rose into the air, ascended more than ten thousand feet, then slowly descended half a league from its starting-point. By reflecting on the ascent of vapors in the atmosphere, and the formation of clouds, the brothers Montgolfier had perceived, that, to raise a colossal machine to the skies, it was only necessary to enclose in a light vessel a fluid of less weight than the atmospheric air, that is, an artificial cloud; and had procured, by means of combustion kept up in the balloon by the aid of a chafing-dish, a gas of half the gravity of air. The marvellous art of causing a body launched from the earth to travel through space was discovered. It was rapidly improved upon. A society of amateurs of physics, at Paris, substituted for the gas of Montgolfier *inflammable air*, of ten times less gravity than atmospheric air; enclosed it in an impermeable covering of oiled silk; and, on a stormy day, launched the new balloon from the Champ de Mars, amidst the applause of an innumerable multitude. The balloon of the Champ de Mars ascended much more rapidly and higher than that of Montgolfier: it mounted above the region of the clouds, and descended at Écouen, four leagues from Paris (August, 1783).

The aerial ship invented, navigators could not be lacking. The audacious genius of the eighteenth century would not draw back

¹ Apropos of this, we may mention that the manufacture of painted paper, which originated in China, was introduced into France about 1780.

when it was in question to conquer for man a new empire, and to take possession "of the immense domain of the air."¹

Joseph de Montgolfier adapted a chafing-dish and a small boat to his machine; and November 21, 1783, the physicist Pilâtre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes trusted themselves to this formidable vehicle, and set out from the Jardin de la Muette (the Bois de Bologne), saluting the crowd, mute with admiration and terror. They passed over all Paris in their aerial craft, and descended voluntarily, by ceasing to keep up the fire, at the Butte-aux-Cailles, south of the great city. A few days after, the physicist Charles successfully repeated the experiment with the balloon filled with inflammable air, a process surer and better fitted for long voyages and great ascents. Ere long, the mechanician Blanchard, surpassing his predecessors in daring, crossed the Channel in a balloon, and landed from Dover on the heights of Calais.²

The people did not doubt that the aerial ships would speedily be steered like the ships of the ocean, and that men would travel in full liberty through the atmosphere. There was an inexpressible intoxication, scarcely saddened for a moment by the catastrophe of Pilâtre de Rozier, who, a new Icarus, fell, hurled from the skies to the shore of that channel which Blanchard had crossed.³ Was there ever a victory that did not cost the sacrifice of some hero? The genius and power of man were destined, therefore, to know no limits! The elements were about to be his docile slaves! A multitude of other marvellous applications of those scientific theories, which were daily growing in magnitude,⁴ was foreseen.

¹ *Description des expériences de la machine aérostique, etc.*, by Fanjas de Saint-Fond, t. II. p. 2.

² He was accompanied by an Englishman, Doctor Jeffries. Each had hung out the flag of his nation. It is related with pride, that, the aeronauts having been forced to throw overboard the ballast and even their clothing to lighten the balloon and keep at a sufficient height, the Englishman threw away his flag: the Frenchman kept his, which floated alone over England.

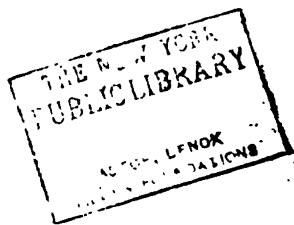
³ Pilâtre had attempted to combine the chafing-dish of Montgolfier with the inflammable air of Charles. This was, as the latter said, like placing a chafing-dish on a barrel of powder.

⁴ It is surprising that steam navigation was not organized as early as this epoch. In 1775, M. de Jouffroi had invented and manœuvred on the Saone a little boat moved by a steam-engine. — See the report to the Academy of Sciences on steam navigation in 1840. Analogous attempts were also made in Lorraine. — See the *Constitutionnel* of September, 1851. Awakened as minds were to scientific innovations, they did not yet comprehend the scope of this magnificent application of the principle of Papin. The electric telegraph had the same fate. The first attempts at this were made at Geneva, in 1774, by a French physicist, Louis Lesage; but three-fourths of a century elapsed before the new form of electricity discovered by Volta in 1800 furnished a decisive instrument to this marvellous invention. Apropos of Volta, it should be



JEAN PIERRE

BLANCHARD.



It was thought certain that this increasing power displayed by man would finally be turned upon himself, and would cause the disappearance of his moral and physical ills. To the visions of pride were joined the not less unbounded visions of philanthropy.¹ There would be no more war, no more injustice, no more tyranny! Could generations so enlightened, and so strong in the future, still know the unfortunate or the wicked? Civilized man, after reforming and purifying civilization, would go, like a beneficent god, to dictate to the savages, from his aerial chariot, the laws of science and true order!²

Golden dreams of a superannuated society which believed itself

mentioned here that Duvernei, of the Academy of Sciences, had made the experiment of the frog as early as 1700, which was repeated by Galvani with so much éclat, and which became *galvanism*. — See *Giornale di Scienze per la Sicilia*, No. 41, cited by Ed. Fournier; *Sicile* of December 21, 1853.

¹ Philanthropy, like science, had bold visions, only because it had brilliant realities. We have already mentioned the Abbe de L'Épée, who restored the unfortunate deaf-mutes to intercourse with their fellows. His successor, Sicard, was about to elevate them from the simple ideas suggested by the senses to general and abstract ideas, and to awaken in them the spiritual man after the material man. In 1784, the brother of the learned physicist, Haüy, founded the institute for blind youth, — other victims rescued, so far as it was in the power of man, from the rigor of Nature. Meanwhile the excellent and indefatigable Parmentier employed his life in seeking means to prevent famine and to increase the articles of food. The potato, brought from Peru as early as the sixteenth century, and cultivated in Italy and the south of France, was considered as a root fit for domestic animals alone. Turgot had introduced it into Limousin and Auvergne. Parmentier demonstrated that it was adapted to the nutriment of man, and made attempts to cultivate it on a large scale, on the plains of Sablon and Grenelle, with the coöperation of the King, who wore in his button-hole potato blossoms presented to him by Parmentier; and this root of the New World, without equaling our cereals in quality, became a supplement to them of immense utility (1773–1784). Parmentier likewise propagated the cultivation of an excellent American cereal, maize; and strove to improve the manufacture of bread.

² The same sentiment, in a more practical and less ambitious form, had inspired the Englishman Cook, the victim of the savages to whom he offered the blessings of civilization; and had dictated the instructions given by the director of the marine, Fleuriot, and by Louis XVI. in person, to the unfortunate La Peyrouse, commissioned to make a great voyage of circumnavigation, with two frigates, for an end at once political, commercial, philanthropic, and scientific (1785). The recommendations to La Peyrouse to seek every means of ameliorating the condition of the savages, and to avoid having recourse to force against them unless absolutely necessary, are very touching. "His Majesty," it is said, "would regard it as one of the most happy successes of the expedition, could it be accomplished without the cost of a single life." — See Lacretelle, *Hist. de France pendant le XVIII. siècle*, t. VI. p. 75. This humane wish was not granted. After three years of labors and discoveries purchased with cruel losses, La Peyrouse and his two vessels disappeared among the archipelagoes of Oceanica. After useless researches for many years, a few relics of the shipwreck which had swallowed up so many precious lives were finally discovered on the reefs of Vanikoro. P. Margry has collected the materials for a Life of La Peyrouse, which will present great interest.

plunged in the Fountain of Youth! Alas! the new birth costs more dearly: we are born again only by passing through the anguish of death.

The society of the eighteenth century ascribed to itself an easier destiny: while celebrating Rousseau, it cast far from it his harsh predictions and the threatening prophecies of a few meditative minds. Some associated the joys promised by the present life, so embellished, with the expectation of a future life; others filled the earth with so many hopes, that it seemed to them to suffice for the human race. The enthusiasm of humanity and perfectibility was personified in a man, who, in some sort, closed the philosophic era of the eighteenth century, and who was soon to cast its last and solemn words to the winds of the revolutionary tempests which were ready to swallow it up. This was Condorcet, a *volcano covered with snow*, as one of his contemporaries calls him; the affectionate disciple of Turgot, and the inheritor of his sentiments without their religious idealism and moral austerity; a mind, a cross between Turgot and Voltaire; the successor of Fontenelle in the *Academic Eulogies*, "those funeral orations which philosophy had purloined from the Church,"¹ and in which the scholars replaced the saints, but very far from thinking like Fontenelle concerning *dangerous truths*, and resolved to let them escape from his hand only at the cost of life; the steadfast champion of civil, political, and economical liberty, and of individual liberty, the basis of all liberty;² one of the heralds of the crusade against negro slavery,³ a crusade which assumed increasing proportions as '89 approached; too much inclined to confound the moral and social world with the physical world ruled by mathematical laws, and to attempt to apply to the variable and passion-

¹ J. Reynaud, *Encyclop. nouv.*, art. CONDORCET.

² In his work on the *Influence of the American Revolution upon Europe*, he condemned the maxim, too widely spread in the ancient and modern republics, that the minority may be legitimately sacrificed to the majority. — *Mélanges économiques*, t. II. p. 545, Guillaumin. At the same time, the partisan of political unity, he published, in 1781, a refutation of Delolme, and a criticism on the English Constitution. Like Franklin and Turgot, who went too far, much too far, — who confounded the legislative and the executive powers, he opposed the system of two houses, and was destined afterwards to apply to the republic that principle of unity which Turgot and D'Argenson applied to the monarchy. Unitary in every thing, after noble and sterile efforts to prevent the fatal division of the Jacobins and the Girondins, he will be confounded by blind passion with the party accused of federalism, only through having courageously reproved the violation of the National Convention on the 31st of May, and having protested against the Constitution of 1793, as opening the door to federalism.

³ *Reflexions sur l'esclavage des nègres*, 1781.

ate movements of the one the exact and fixed rules of the other :¹ containing in himself almost all that there would be vigorous and original, and in part erroneous, in Saint-Simon, and in the different schools of the nineteenth century ; which would seek perfectibility, above all, in the progress of the physical sciences and the advent of an industrial era ; dreaming, lastly, — he, the pupil of experimental philosophy, the child of Voltaire ! — of the immortality of the body in default of that of the soul, and thus disguising under an obscure and fantastic form the indestructible sentiment of the infinite, he was to give his final conclusion only in a sketch traced in the depth of an outlaw's retreat,² a stone's throw from the scaffold ; the monument of a faith in humanity which the loss of the sweet illusions of 1783 had been unable to shake ; a hymn to the indefinite perfectibility of man, written while awaiting death ; a work of a moral greatness which is the more astonishing, inasmuch as it was not sustained by the true religious ideal, — the ideal of perfectibility beyond the grave ; a greatness which could no longer even be comprehended in epochs of indifference, and debasement of soul !

The testament of Condorcet will be found in this maxim, which expressed in advance all the legitimate aspirations of modern *socialism* : —

“All social institutions should have for their end the amelioration, in a physical, moral, and intellectual point of view, of the most numerous and the poorest classes.”³

From Condorcet to the mystics, from the school of Ferney to cabalistic incantations, who could believe the transition natural ? It was found in the idea which Condorcet disclosed at the end of the career open to perfectibility ; in the dream of escaping physical death, the final limit where materialism ends, and renounces its action, and which leads the mind of man into the midst of an extra-scientific, extra-philosophical order. The age of Voltaire, in its decline, stretched out its hand to the occult sciences of the Middle Ages.

¹ We are not, however, absolutely to reject the attempts of mathematicians in this respect. It is impossible to arrive at certainty in this path ; but the chances of probability to which moral facts, taken as a social whole, may be reduced, may be calculated with profit.

² *Esquisse d'un Tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*, written in 1793, and published in 1795, by order of the National Convention.

³ *Rapport à la Convention nationale sur l'Instruction publique*. Concerning Condorcet, see his *Biographie*, by M. Arago, 1849, and the article of J. Reynaud, *Encyclop. nouvelle*.

Rousseau had effected a great and glorious reaction, in the name of sentiment, against that mutilated rationalism which had been made the servant of sensation; but the limits within which Rousseau had the wisdom to confine his action, in order to render its effect more sure, had already ceased to satisfy the heart, and, above all, the imagination. He had interdicted the mysteries which surround men on all sides: they were beginning again to seek to fathom them, with tendencies and in directions very different. Those even, at least many of those, who denied or doubted the simplest and most universal principles of religious philosophy, set about seeking, or rather inventing, the occult causes of things, the physical secret of life, like the adepts of ancient alchemy; and abdicated the experimental method, as well as rationalism, while remaining sensualists. Others, affecting strange and obscure formulas and practices, aspired only to create for themselves a political and social element adapted to excite the public strongly by the attraction of the unknown. Other minds, lastly, aimed higher in their sublime temerity; wished to re-create the *spiritual* man, the principle of the social or external man; and undertook not only to bring back man to his true principle, God, but to cause him to find God in his heart as the immanent and perpetually active cause of his being; to explain the world by man, and no longer man by the world; and to reopen in this life the communication with the higher spheres, which *seers* had been believed to possess in all ages and countries.

The secret societies were naturally the receptacle of all this ferment of ideas and ardent aspirations. From 1770, or a little before, Freemasonry, already very widely spread, assumed an immense growth, and tended to change in character. At first the simple instrument of tolerance, humanity, and fraternity, acting in a general and somewhat vague manner on the sentiments of its adepts and of the society which they influenced,¹ it tended to become an instrument of agitation and action, a direct organ of transformation. The three kinds of mysticism which we have just pointed out wrought upon and penetrated it simultaneously,—the mysticism which may be styled sensualistic; the political mysticism, which was mystical only in appearance; and the theosophic or true mysticism.

¹ The governments that sought to pass for enlightened at first favored Freemasonry, like the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is known that Frederick the Great was a Freemason. Strange to say, the Emperor Francis I., the husband of Maria Theresa, was one also.

From 1778, a German physician profoundly stirred Paris by announcing the cure of all diseases by the virtue of a universal agent which he had discovered, and which he directed at his pleasure. All beings, Mesmer affirmed, are plunged into an ocean of fluid, by the medium of which they act upon each other. Man can concentrate this fluid, and direct the currents upon his fellows, either by immediate contact, or from a distance, by the direction of the finger or of any *conductor* whatsoever. These currents carry health and life with them into the bodies, the functions of which are disordered. They cure nervous diseases directly, and all other diseases indirectly. Through its analogy to magnetic attraction or mineral magnetism, Mesmer styled this influence *animal magnetism*. Certain prodigies of ancient systems of religion, miraculous cures by the imposition of hands, trances of a multitude of people, and other extraordinary phenomena wrought by men upon other men, were, according to the audacious innovator, nought but *magnetic* phenomena.

The impression produced by Mesmer was immense. The women, the youth, all minds enamoured with what was unknown, and captivated by the boundless hopes which were the characteristic of the times, were carried away with it.¹ Many thinkers were glad at last to see some other explanation given of the mysterious facts of history than the hackneyed charge of imposture against all thaumaturgists, and founders of religious systems. As to the masses, they rushed to Mesmer's *tub* with an eagerness far more general than that with which they had formerly flocked to the grave of the Deacon Pâris. We shall not recount those fantastic but well-known incidents in which the convulsions of Saint-Médard were well-nigh renewed under a less violent and gloomy aspect, or the obstinate disputes of Mesmer and his disciples with the scientific bodies; disputes which ended in the celebrated report made by Bailli, in the name of a commission appointed from the Faculty of Medicine and the Academy of Sciences (1784). Science, by the voice of Bailli, rejected as arbitrary the hypothesis of the magnetic fluid, and consequently the power of directing this fluid, which Mesmer and his disciples ascribed to themselves; and, without absolutely denying the phenomena pointed out, attributed them exclusively to a moral cause, — *the power of the imagination*. To deny

¹ The correspondence of La Fayette with Washington preserves very curious traces of this enthusiasm. — *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 93. The youthful defender of American liberty was wholly subjugated by Mesmer.

these phenomena, indeed, involved historical difficulties far graver than their admission within certain limits ; but it is very doubtful whether the explanation of Bailli was sufficient, although there is reason to believe that the unknown cause which acted so powerfully upon the nervous system of man was in a far greater degree moral than physical.

The developments which mesmerism received, and which altogether transformed its character, proceeded in the direction which we have just indicated. Natural somnambulism, and its astonishing effects, explained in past times by superhuman causes, either beneficent or malevolent, was obscurely understood. The eighteenth century had neglected these strange facts. Suddenly an artificial somnambulism was produced. The brothers Puy-Ségur, the disciples of Mesmer, induced upon the sick, by the exercise of magnetic action, whatever might be its nature, instead of the nervous crises of Mesmer's *tub*, an abnormal sleep ; during which the somnambulist had the power of looking within his own body, or that of the person with whom he was placed in magnetic connection, and at times, even, it was claimed, of exceeding all the limits assigned to the action and scope of our senses, and of extending far into space, and even into time, a vision which was no longer that of the body ; that is, of recovering the *second-sight* of the seers and sibyls. Here the materialism still contained in the theory of Mesmer finally disappeared, and men floated in pure mysticism. The interpretation of the historical traditions by *magnetism* completed and embraced all the mysteries of antiquity. The fascination redoubled together with the opposition : the materialists were exasperated at so sudden and unexpected a reaction ; the scholars were terrified and indignant at seeing the ancient world of the occult sciences suddenly reappear, and defy experimental philosophy and prudential methods, the parents of so much progress. Spiritualistic philosophy itself had reason to be troubled at such a tendency in the public mind, so full of peril and delusion. This tendency, however, it must be said, was superficial in the greater number. The genius of the eighteenth century speedily recovered from the kind of surprise which it had experienced, and turned this effervescent ardor again to politics : nevertheless, magnetism and somnambulism continued at intervals to excite a lively interest, and to manifest facts outside of the ordinary laws of physics, although these facts did not become sufficiently established to enter the domain of science. The problem remained a problem.

The mystical movement had attained its highest degree elsewhere than in magnetism. Secret adepts of doctrines emanating from the Cabala, or mystical philosophy of the Jews, and from the Alexandrine and Gnostic Neo-Platonism revived by the Renaissance, had always continued here and there since the sixteenth century. A singular personage, Martinez Pasqualis, a Portuguese Jew, as it is believed, introduced into a number of the French Masonic lodges, from 1754 to 1768, a rite bearing the Hebrew title of *Cohens* (priests). In the initiation-ceremonies of the Martinists, as the disciples of Martinez were called, not only *internal* communications with the world of spirits, but visible manifestations, that is to say, theurgic evocations and superstitious practices, mingled with an otherwise elevated ideality, were in question. A young officer, named Saint-Martin,¹ was initiated at Bordeaux by Martinez, — one of the most religious and purest souls that ever dwelt on earth. He did not long remain bound to this *cabalistic* sect: while admitting the reality of the superhuman intercourse which was sought therein, he rejected it as dangerous, and confined himself to pure theosophy. The book, *On Truth and Error, by an Unknown Philosopher*,² a work of a veiled greatness, and a fascination the more captivating, inasmuch as we feel therein soul communing with soul apart from all earthly preoccupation, the anonymous work of Saint-Martin, did not methodically set forth the common foundation of Hebraic and Platonic mysticism, the theory of man created in a state of enlightenment, liberty, and immortality, then falling by his own fault into the domain of corporeal nature and death; into *the region of fathers and mothers*, as Saint-Martin forcibly says, but able to rise again towards his first source by a good use of the liberty which remains to him.³ Saint-Martin did not argue like a philosopher or a theologian: he revived these antique ideas by an outpouring of Christian sentiment of singular power. Spiritual life itself appeared in action in his words. Whatever may be thought of the foundation of his doctrine, he was admirable when he showed human science wasting its strength on phenomena, instead of going back to the cause, and foolishly persisting in explaining the universe without God,

¹ The resemblance of his name to that of his master has often caused them to be confounded.

² Printed at Lyons, in 1775, under the imprint of Edinburgh.

³ This is one of the two great contradictory explanations of human destiny, and the antithesis of that of our fathers, the Druids and the bards, which was creation in the lowest degree of being, with an ascending progression.

instead of explaining the universe by God. It is not our province to follow him in the development of his gigantic *à priori*;¹ but we must point out the traces of his thought in history. To him belonged the theocratic idea which was to manifest itself, subsequent to 1830, in the Saint-Simonian sect; a sect very contrary, however, to the spirit of Saint-Martin. The *Unknown Philosopher* desired the government of one alone; the most loving, the most enlightened, the *rehabilitated* man should assert his claims, and set himself up by divine authority. There is no legitimate government, he asserts, except that of the *rehabilitated* man over other men who have not attained this condition. In the ideal state, with all humanity *rehabilitated*, and raised again to its primordial condition, there would be no governments: every man would be king.

This idea, long before Saint-Simonism, infiltrated itself more or less obscurely into the Revolution until the time of Robespierre, as the enemies of the formidable leader of the Jacobins instinctively felt; for Saint-Martin, personally an entire stranger to the desperate strife of parties and the sanguinary interpretation which was given to his ideas, was involved in the persecution waged against Catherine Théot, Dom Gerle, and some other revolutionary mystics, shortly before the 9th Thermidor, by the men who were paving the way for the fall of Robespierre.

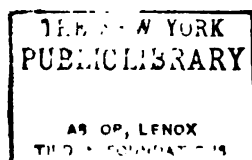
We must revert to previous years, and to personages less pure and more restless than Saint-Martin. We cannot abstain from mentioning here a fantastic figure who appeared in Paris about the time that Mesmer quitted this capital, in 1781, and who, without forming a sect like Mesmer, made almost as much noise as the discoverer of magnetism; namely, the pretended Count Cagliostro,² half-charlatan, half-enthusiast, moved by the ambition to play an extraordinary part rather than by cupidity, and who, owing to the singular attraction of his physiognomy and address, succeeded in gaining credit with numerous men of importance, and in exercising a certain influence over the Masonic lodges,

¹ He published a considerable number of works, both original, and translated from the great German mystic Jacob Böhme, from 1775 to 1803, the epoch of his death. We will only remark that Saint-Martin did not depart from the ideas of ordinary Christian theology concerning the *source of evil*, the introduction of evil into the world by a being superior to man, and fallen before him; while another celebrated mystic of the eighteenth century, the Swede Swedenborg, admitted no other angels of good and evil than the souls of men transmigrated to another state of existence. The *Wonders of Heaven and Hell*, by Swedenborg, was translated in 1783.

² He was a Sicilian, by the name of Joseph Balsamo.



GEORGE ORRIDGE



while circulating the most absurd fables concerning his origin and life, and evoking the souls of the dead like a magician of antiquity. We shall presently meet him again in the celebrated affair of the *diamond necklace*, which was destined to consummate the discredit of the royal family, and to accelerate the fall of the throne. If the deposition wrung from him by the Holy Office of Rome, in 1790, may be relied on, he revealed the source from which he obtained funds to provide for his errant and luxurious life. This money came from the coffers of a great secret society, founded since 1776, in Germany, by the Bavarian professor Weishaupt. It was Cagliostro's mission to induce the French Freemasons to favor Weishaupt's projects.

The political spirit had already penetrated deeply into Freemasonry. The maxims of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which the Revolution was speedily to consecrate in the imperishable formula of its political ternary, constituted the principal foundation of the high grades recently superadded to the ancient Masonic hierarchy. This hierarchy had been strongly concentrated, in 1772, by the creation of the Grand Orient, with jurisdiction over all the lodges of France and a number of foreign lodges; and Freemasonry, faithful to its habit of seeking supporters on the very steps of the throne, had elected as grand master, after the Prince de Conti, the young Duke de Chartres. Almost all the men destined to play any important part in the Revolution figured in the lodges of Paris or the provinces. Condorcet, a member of the celebrated Lodge of the *Nine Sisters*, into which Voltaire was received, has indicated, in his *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind*, what blows had been dealt to *monarchical idolatry* and *superstition* by secret societies sprung from the *order of the Templars*. In the high grades, moreover, were found represented the different and even contrary tendencies of which we have spoken, united by sentiments of progress, philanthropy, and enfranchisement.

This diversity, which likewise existed outside of France, the German Weishaupt undertook to efface, and at the same time to transform the great intellectual and moral association into a universal conspiracy. This man, "one of the profoundest conspirators that ever existed,"¹ dreamed of doing, to demolish the ancient régime, what Loyola had done to save the Roman

¹ Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution*, t. II. p. 84. — See the whole of Louis Blanc's brilliant chapter on the Revolutionary mystics; keeping in mind the difference of our stand-points, especially in the interpretation given to the idea of Saint-Martin.

church. He organized by the side of Freemasonry, and with the hope of absorbing it, a counter society of Jesus, with all the maxims and all the practices of the Jesuits carried beyond the Jesuits themselves, — passive obedience, universal espionage, the principle that *the end justifies the means*, etc.¹ In four or five years, indeed, he extended a truly formidable network over Germany, and, by means of his adepts, succeeded in participating in all public affairs, and knowing the cabinet secrets of all the princes. He did not aim, at least for the present, to prepare the way for popular movements, but to make converts of persons of importance, and to raise his affiliated members to important positions in order to influence and direct the governments. What was the aim of *illuminism*, the name which the secret doctrine of Weishaupt borrowed from the mystics? This aim, for which he displayed such surprising practical faculties, and which he pursued by moving so many men and things with such eager ardor for success, and so little care for morality, was the most intangible Utopia that could ever have been imagined by a solitary thinker, remote from the world and from all reality. Such a contrast could scarcely be seen anywhere but in Germany. Weishaupt had erected into an absolute theory the misanthropic sally of Rousseau against the institution of property and society; and without heeding the declaration so explicitly made by Rousseau, of the impossibility of abolishing property and society once established, he proposed as the end of illuminism the abolition of property, social authority, and nationality, and the return of the human race to the *happy condition wherein it formed but one family*,² without artificial needs, without useless sciences, with every father a priest and magistrate, — a priest we know not of what religion; for, despite the frequent invocation to the God of Nature in the initiation-rites, many indications give rise to the presumption that Weishaupt, like Diderot and Holbach, had no other God than Nature herself. From his doctrine thus proceeded German *Ultra-Hegelianism*, and the system of *anarchy* recently developed in France, where its physiognomy indicates a foreign origin.³

¹ He borrowed at the same time from governments the practice of violating the secrecy of letters.

² Here the chimerical spirit of Weishaupt is most clearly manifested. Rousseau, preserving the good sense of genius even in paradox, knew well that the human race in the savage state, far from forming a *single family*, could offer nothing but isolated individuals. It was the *human race* only virtually: it was not such in point of fact, since it was not conscious of its unity.

³ Although French manners are diametrically opposed to communism, the Utopian

The detailed history of German illuminism does not belong to our subject. It is important only to observe that the great majority of the illuminati were never initiated into the whole thought of Weishaupt, which explains the facility with which he united so many men who defined the progress of humanity quite differently from himself. It was in 1782, at the time of the general congress held by the delegates from the Freemasons of all countries at Wilhemsbad, that he made his principal attempt to possess himself of Freemasonry. The illuminati disputed the ascendancy in the congress with the Martinist and Swedenborgian mystics, and obtained the affiliation of a great number of the deputies; but these conversions, which did not go to the bottom of things, did not produce the results outside of Germany hoped for by Weishaupt. The propaganda of the illuminati, nevertheless, continued its progress; but it was very difficult for such an organization long to remain secret. Its existence was revealed to the Bavarian government from 1785 to 1786. The papers of Weishaupt fell into the hands of the Elector of Bavaria, who, probably guided by the ex-Jesuits, caused them to be printed, and sent them to all the governments of Europe, in order to warn them of the danger encountered by *all altars and all thrones*. Little heed was given to this warning; and it was with a sovereign prince, the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, that the outlawed Weishaupt found an asylum for the remainder of his days. This duke, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, so famous since the Seven-Years' War, and several other German princes, were affiliated to the illuminati of Weishaupt; while the hereditary Prince of Prussia, the nephew of Frederick the Great, was completely ruled by the Swedenborgian and other mystics.¹ The affiliated princes believed that they had nothing to fear from a reformer who had not told them every thing, and who, moreover, in the initiation-rites, protested against all appeal to the force of the masses while men remained as they were, and declared that *thousands and thousands of years* would perhaps be needed to attain the end. It should nevertheless be acknowledged, that, when the French Revolution broke out, our armies met useful auxiliaries among the illuminati of the Rhenish provinces, who probably were unwilling

spirit in France, when it attacks property, is naturally more inclined to invoke organized communism than *anarchy*: the latter is German.

¹ It was to please Frederick the Great, and to draw his nephew from the illuminati, — for all the secret societies were confounded under this name, — that Mirabeau wrote his *Lettre sur Cagliostro et Lavater*, 1786

to go as far as their former leader, but desired to reach the end more quickly.

Weishaupt, however, personally took no part in the great events which so closely followed his retreat to Gotha; and the relations which the other leaders of the illuminati, his successors, formed with Parisian Freemasonry, may indeed have introduced therein some measures adapted to concentrate and strengthen the unity of action of the order, but by no means the personal principles of Weishaupt. The communist doctrines which were manifested later under an evangelical form in Fauchet, and under a material and violent form in Babeuf, proceeded from Morelli and Mabli, more or less rightly understood, rather than from the leader of the illuminati. Freemasonry remained among us, until 1789, the general instrument of philosophy and the laboratory of the Revolution, not the organ of a wholly exceptional sect. In a word, it was well-nigh what it was desired to be by a man of a genius as practical as that of Weishaupt was impractical, and who had projected its reformation in order to give it a more precise end, at the very moment when Weishaupt dreamed of drowning it in his illuminism. In 1776, the youthful Mirabeau had drawn up a plan of reform, in which he proposed to the Masonic order to labor with moderation, but with resolution and persevering activity, progressively to transform the world, to undermine despotism, and to pursue civil, economical, and religious emancipation, and the full conquest of individual liberty.¹

The men of thought, as we have said, made way for the men of action. While Voltaire, Rousseau, and Turgot, who constituted the link between these two kinds of men, descended to the grave, the strange and restless figure of Mirabeau began to appear on the horizon, with its *magnificent ugliness*, illuminated by so many flashes of light; a Titanic ugliness alike powerful in good and in evil; a physiognomy furrowed by lightnings, in which the signs of the most unbridled passion and the profoundest good sense struggled for mastery; a vicious great man, and very sorry for being such; full of regrets for a past which he could not efface, and for habits which he could not break; and who remained in vice too lofty of mind and even of heart not to feel the price of virtue, — of that virtue which perhaps he only lacked to become the first man of his times, and the undisputed leader of the greatest movement of history.

¹ *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. II. liv. vi. He carried moderation so far at that time as to admit of indemnity to the seigniors who should renounce feudal rights.

Let us, at least, do him this justice, — that, through the moral errors and the deplorable compromises of his life, he pursued with full sincerity the conquest of free institutions; thus insuring to his tempestuous memory the forgiveness of posterity. The victim of the abuse of paternal power, the son of a feudal race which had preserved all its primitive strength and violence amidst the general enervation of the noble caste, rebelling against this race which oppressed him, yet retaining its energies, its instincts, and in part its sentiments, he opposed despotism of every kind as a personal enemy. Dragged from prison to prison by the *lettres de cachet* obtained by his father, he wrote the *Essay on Despotism* in the Château of If (1772) at twenty-three; ¹ the *Advice to the Hessians*, to urge them to refuse obedience to the unworthy prince who sold their blood to the English in his refuge in Holland (1777); and his book, on *Lettres de Cachet*, in the donjon of Vincennes (1778).² Each of his anonymous books, the abrupt eloquence of which reproduced his father's vigorous originality and bursts of ideas cleared from the rubbish and confusion of the aged economist, — each of his books was an act. His writings were already what his immortal discourses were to be.

He in turn, after Turgot, resumed the design of transforming the monarchy, but by means and in conditions quite different. The age had progressed. Reformation in high places no longer sufficed, — was no longer possible. What Mirabeau desired was revolution, with the King at the head: in a word, it was still royalty, but no longer monarchy. The hereditary transmission of the throne was no longer a principle, but a fact subordinate to the sovereignty of the people.³

Revolution with royalty was much more difficult than reforma-

¹ "Man's place is in society, whatever Rousseau may have said," etc.

² It was in this that he refuted the *enlightened despotism* of his father and other economists, as incompatible with civil liberty; and that he wrote the menacing sentence, "I ask whether there is to-day a government in Europe, the Helvetic and Batavian confederations and the British isles alone excepted, which, judged according to the principles of the Declaration of the American Congress of July 4, 1776, would not have forfeited its rights."

This book was in some sort the *Social Contract* revised and limited with a view to a speedy application. For instance, Mirabeau, while laying down the sovereignty of the people, excluded, like Voltaire and Mably, the lowest classes from political rights, — an exclusion which he afterwards retracted; and, though he desired the arming of the people (the national guard), it was the land-owning and settled portion of the people. He demanded the responsibility of all magistrates; the entire separation of the legislative, the executive, and the judicial powers; the abolition of entailments, and of all laws tending to favor equality.

³ *Lettres de cachet*, ap. *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. p. 36.

tion by royalty would lately have been : the chances of realization, above all the chances of duration, were much less : perhaps it was not yet an absolute impossibility, at least for a brief period.

Scarcely released from his long captivity (about the end of 1780), Mirabeau strove to redeem himself from discredit, and to effect a reconciliation with the government in order to counsel it, at the same time that he continued his innovating, or, to speak more truly, revolutionary writings. He wrote a memorial to the Queen ; he projected for her, in order to restore her popularity and to give her active occupation, a kind of ministry of the fine arts ; he wished her to finish the Louvre, and to form the Gallery of the Museum with all the masterpieces of art which were piled up in obscurity in the turrets of the royal residences ; he threw out a multitude of ingenious or grand ideas concerning the embellishment of Paris, which have since been partly realized. On the other hand, he published under his name, and with great éclat, at the instigation of Franklin, his *Considerations on the Order of Cincinnatus*, in which he attacked every species of privilege attached to the nobility, while attacking the kind of republican knighthood which the officers of the liberating army of the United States had just instituted among themselves (September, 1784).¹ He strove to have one foot in the cabinet, and the other on the most advanced ground of the boldest writers. For several years, his prophetic words did not weary of resounding in the ears of the men of power who were about to cease to exist ! But to what prophet have powers destined to perish ever hearkened ?

¹ The danger of this association was in the design entertained by the American officers of transmitting the decoration of the Cincinnatus to their children. They abandoned the project.



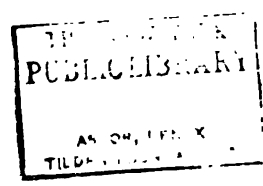
Engraving by G. B. S. 1791.

MIRABEAU.



MIRABEAU

MIRABEAU.



CHAPTER VIII.

LOUIS XVI. (CONCLUDED.)

LAST DAYS OF THE MONARCHY.—Ministry of CALONNE. Financial Chaos. *The Diamond Necklace*. Calonne attempts to undertake Reform in his Turn. **ASSEMBLY OF THE NOTABLES.** Acknowledgment of the Deficit. Fall of Calonne. Ministry of Brienne. Renewal of the Dissensions between the Crown and the Parliaments. The Parliament of Paris demands the STATES-GENERAL. Humiliation Abroad. Affairs of Holland. Brienne imitates Maupeou's Opposition to the Parliaments. The *Plenary Court*. The Nobility supports the Parliaments. Disturbances in Brittany, Béarn, and Dauphiny. Assembly of Vizille. Promise of the STATES-GENERAL for 1789. Beginning of Bankruptcy. Fall of Brienne. Recall of Necker. Second Assembly of the Notables. Great Movement of the Political Press. Contest between the Third Estate and the Privileged Orders. Pamphlet of Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?* Disturbances in Brittany. MIRABEAU in Provence. The Elections. THE CAHIERS. Opening of the STATES-GENERAL. The Third Estate declares itself the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. **END OF THE ANCIENT RÉGIME AND OF THE MONARCHY.**

1783-1789.

ALMOST immediately after the close of the war again brought the royal power face to face with the internal perils, we have seen the ministry of finance, the most important ministry, fall into the hands of a new comptroller-general, to whom Mirabeau was to lend, for a brief time, the assistance of his pen.

What was the real worth of this so much disputed personage? Concerning Calonne's morality, there is but one opinion;¹ concerning his capacity, opinions are divided. All grant him a captivating mind, a great facility of conception and labor, and a singular gift of fascination; but, in general, it has been believed, either that he suffered himself to be carried away by the illusions with which he fascinated others, or that his perverse frivolity staked the destinies of the State from day to day in a great game of chance. "Your vision is always bounded by the success of the moment," wrote Mirabeau to him in a fit of anger; "and the

¹ His conduct towards La Chalotais had been even more ignominious than we have described it: he had obtained the confidence of this great magistrate in order to weave a treacherous plot for his destruction.

horizon of your ideas never extends any farther."¹ An historian of our times² believes, on the contrary, that the frivolity was only superficial; that Calonne followed a profound and well-digested plan; that he completed the ruin of the finances in the manner that we shall witness, only because he was persuaded that half-measures were powerless, and that the privileged orders would renounce their privileges only in the presence of absolute necessity and on the brink of appalling ruin; and that he wished to bring them, without their knowledge, to the brink of this gulf, and to terrify them by its sudden revelation.

We do not attribute to this man such consistency and profundity; neither do we attribute to him all the blindness which others ascribe to him. He took the finances as a venture; but the adventurer had too much intelligence not to suspect at least that he would finally reach a point where all known expedients would become impracticable. "We will dextrously readjust affairs; we will sustain them as long as we can by force of charlatanism and audacity; we will live on joyously from day to day; we will grant to all who ask; we will give the court a last festival: then, when the cup is empty, if we can no longer fill it, we will launch on the ocean of great reforms, and copy Turgot as late as possible. Meanwhile, we shall have enjoyed and lived." These were probably the true sentiments of this man, who acknowledged to a grave personage, the aged Machault, that he would not have undertaken the King's affairs had it not been for the bad condition of his own.³

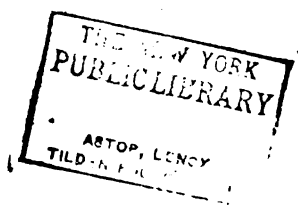
The King's affairs were indeed in a deplorable state when Calonne entered the comptroller-generalship. The treasury was empty.⁴ The old and new systems of finance, the revenue-

¹ See Mirabeau's forcible list of charges against Calonne, ap. *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 192.

² Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution française*, t. II. ch. v.

³ He made indeed another confession, to the great surprise of the ex-minister, who had done nothing, according to his own words, "to merit such extraordinary confidence." He told him, that, in his first interview with the King, he had acknowledged to Louis XVI. that his debts amounted to two hundred and twenty thousand francs. "A comptroller-general," he said to the King, "can easily find means of liquidating his debts; but I prefer to owe every thing to the goodness of your majesty." Louis, without saying a word, took from a desk two hundred and thirty thousand francs' worth of stock of the Company of the Waters of Paris, and gave them to Calonne, who kept the stock, and succeeded in paying his debts in another manner!—See Monthon, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 279.

⁴ There were only three hundred and sixty thousand francs in the treasury. Calonne, in his *Memorial to the King*, to produce more effect, said that there were only two bags of twelve hundred crowns each.





M. DE CALONE.

farmers and the bankers,—credit under both its forms,—were disorganized by the annulment of the leases of the farms, and the suspension of payment by the bank of discount. The consolidated debt had increased three hundred and forty-five millions since the fall of Necker, or in two years and a half. There existed an arrearage of two hundred and twenty millions on the marine, of one hundred and seventy millions on various other things, one hundred and seventy-six millions of advances, and a deficit of eighty millions, for the current year; in all, six hundred and forty-six millions of floating debt due. The annual revenue amounted to five hundred and five millions; but from this it was necessary to deduct two hundred and five millions for *rentes* constituted, and interest on advances and securities, together with forty-five millions for the redemption of annuities and lotteries: there remained, therefore, but two hundred and fifty-five millions at the disposal of the government, and the ordinary expenses required at least three hundred millions. The annual deficit, until the redemption of all the annuities and lotteries, that is for many years, must be, therefore, fifty millions.¹

Calonne began his career brilliantly. He gained a majority in the council² by inducing Vergennes to consent to the suppression of the committee of finance, which placed those of the ministers who were not members of it in an inferior position. He won the favor of the financiers by reestablishing the lease of the farms (November 9, 1783). He revived credit by suppressing the compulsory currency of the notes of the bank of discount before the time fixed by his predecessor. The bankers and a treasury-broker enabled the bank to meet its engagements; and a favorable official statement of its assets and debts, adroitly circulated among the people, reanimated confidence: a thousand new shares which were issued were readily taken, and the bank enlarged its operations, and regained the greatest favor.³ Calonne took advantage of this first success to close a loan of his predecessor which had not been filled, and to open another of one hundred millions of life-*rentes*, on conditions seductive to the lenders, and onerous to the State (December, 1783). The parliament

¹ Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. p. 250.

² He entered the council, as minister of State, January 23, 1784.

³ The bank was obliged always to hold specie to the amount of at least one-fourth of the value of the notes in circulation: the discount was limited to ninety days, at four per cent a month, and four and a half per cent for a longer term. — *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXIII. p. 35.

registered it, with remonstrances. It cost Calonne nothing to reply to remonstrances by promises. He had lavished them in advance in the preamble of the edict announcing the loan. "Order, economy, and regularity presided over all transactions; and the establishment of a balance between the receipts and expenditures would speedily lead to the diminution of the taxes." The loan succeeded to such a degree, that it attained a premium of eleven per cent above the par value. The Dutch, who took advantage of peace to withdraw their money from the Bank of England and invest it in France, greatly conduced to its prompt success.

A decree of the council, March 14, 1784, seemed to begin to justify the fair promises of Calonne. The winter having been long and severe, and followed by great inundations, the King granted seven millions for assistance and repairs, to be obtained in great part by retrenchment in the King's household, the public buildings, the pensions, the favors, and the large salaries. It was announced that the preparatory inquiries (commenced under Turgot) for the suppression of the internal customs were being actively carried forward. In August, 1784, a sinking-fund was again created, which was endowed with three millions a year, and to which were likewise assigned the arrears of the perpetual *rentes* which were extinguished with these three millions, and of the life-*rentes* in proportion to their extinction, estimated at twelve million francs a year. According to the calculations furnished to Calonne by a friend of Mirabeau, an able financier, by the name of Panchaud, who had studied the mechanism of compound interest, already successfully employed by the English, the new fund would extinguish, in twenty-five years, more than twelve hundred and sixty millions of the debt, both floating and consolidated, and liberate the treasury from more than ninety-one millions of arrears and other annual obligations. Calonne declared that even war, should it be renewed, would not suspend the operations of this liberating institution.¹

Wise men shook their heads; but the public was for a moment dazzled. Calonne achieved a truly incredible triumph. If, in this too-forgetful nation, there is any part of the population which remembers and obstinately retains its affections and hatreds, it is doubtless Brittany. It was in the country of La Chalotais that Calonne was best known; yet he found means of raising the cry

¹ *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVII. p. 464; Bailli, t. II. p. 253; Droz, t. I. p. 454.

of "*Long live Calonne!*" in Rennes itself, at the gates of that Palace of Justice which had witnessed his ignominy! His predecessor, the keeper of the seals, and the minister of the King's household, had plotted to suppress the States of Brittany, and to reduce this province to the condition of the *pays d'élection*. Calonne procured the abandonment of this dangerous and iniquitous undertaking; protested to and partly persuaded the most influential Bretons that he had formerly been calumniated; caused the restitution to the States of the appointment of their deputies, with other concessions; and obtained from them, with acclamations, a gratuity of double the usual amount! (November–December, 1784.)¹

The joy of the court was far greater than that of the public; but the conduct of affairs suited this little privileged world too well for the satisfaction long to be shared by society at large. Calonne was the first to laugh with the courtiers at the grave maxims which he displayed before the King, the parliaments, and the public. He explained to them his true economic theory, a *broad economy*, which consisted in spending freely in order to appear rich, and in appearing rich in order to be able to borrow largely. The courtiers understood this kind of economy better than that of Turgot and Necker. Practice corresponded to theory. The treasury was open without reservation to the princes, the Queen, and the men in credit. The brothers of the King were not content with their immense revenues: their debts were paid. The Queen desired Saint-Cloud: that magnificent residence of the Duke of Orleans was purchased for her. The Prince de Guéméné had become bankrupt for thirty millions, as has already been said: the domain of Lorient and some other feudal estates of the Rohans were purchased of him for the King, at an exorbitant price, to aid him in appeasing his creditors. Every great noble involved in debt who had an estate to sell offered it to the King. In three years, seventy millions were expended in these useless and onerous purchases.² Those who wished to exchange estates instead of selling them were equally well received; and it is needless to say that the crown was never the gainer in these transactions. Calonne and his friends did not forget themselves in obliging others. All means were legitimate to the comptroller-general that would secure him partisans. The *croupes* and preferred shares

¹ *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXVII. p. 101; Droz, t. I. p. 402.

² We must deduct from Calonne's account Rambouillet, purchased before his accession, despite his predecessor.

in the farms and the administration of the indirect taxes by the government, the leases and contracts given out privately instead of being put up for competition, and the increase and reversion of pensions, reappeared, and this at the very moment that a royal declaration (May 8, 1785) announced that pensions would be granted thenceforth only in proportion to the extinction of those existing. Fiscal dues were null and void with respect to all who had access to the comptroller-general. Calonne daily granted the diminution or entire remission of the duties imposed upon the transmission of office or the transfer of feudal estates. The revenues from the domains, the aids, the villain-taxes, and the salt-taxes, lost more than two millions annually through remissions by favor. The prodigious amount of the royal orders on the treasury, the expenditures screened from the regular accounts, exceeded, after the fall of Necker, any thing that had been witnessed under Louis XV. The royal orders on the treasury amounted, in 1785, to more than one hundred and thirty-six millions,¹ more than twenty-one millions of which were in drafts at sight, for what persons or what objects no one knew. All the expenses increased at a mad rate. The spirit of indolence and disorder invaded the bureaux, after the example of the cabinet of the minister. What had constituted eight divisions and cost three hundred thousand francs in the time of the Abbé Terrai, laborious and orderly in his vices, was transformed, under Calonne, into twenty-eight departments, which expended three millions.

Among so many insane and criminal dilapidations, a single object of expenditure would have been deserving of praise, although display had too great a part therein, had the continuance and completion of what was undertaken been insured by a provident administration; namely, those works commenced everywhere for the embellishment and sanitary improvement of the large cities, and especially the works in the seaports and on the canals,—works in which the government was seconded, and sometimes anticipated by the provinces and towns. On seeing the fruitful activity displayed in enlarging or improving the harbors of Havre, Dunkirk, Dieppe, La Rochelle, Agde, and Cette, and completing the canalization of Languedoc² by joining the basin of the Rhone to those of the Loire, the Seine, and the Rhone, by three new canals,³—on

¹ They had amounted to still more in 1783, — more than one hundred and forty-five millions. — See Bailli, *Hist. financière*, t. II. p. 266.

² The canal from Beaucaire to Aigues-Mortes.

³ The Central, the Burgundy, and the Rhone and the Rhine Canals. The plans of the Berry Canal were also decided upon in 1786.

seeing that Titanic undertaking of Cherbourg which was at last to realize the idea of Colbert,¹ and to give to France, in spite of Nature, a formidable port of war at the entrance of the Channel, who could have believed himself on the eve of the fall of a monarchy and a system of society?

To provide for the requirements of such a gift, Calonne completed the ruin of the future. He paid annually nearly thirty millions of interest on the advances made to the treasury. He sold to the counties of Bar-sur-Seine and Auxerre the redemption of the aids in perpetuity; and, in order to obtain a loan of ten millions at interest from the States of maritime Flanders, he pledged to them for ten years, in consideration of a trifling tribute, the taxes on consumption, termed *Droits des quatre membres de Flandre*. He restored the monopoly of the India trade by establishing a new privileged company, upon which he relied for advances in case of need.² He raised money by creating fiscal offices; reestablished all those *alternate* offices, those duplicate posts, which had been abolished under Turgot and Necker; and made an enormous present, also at the expense of the State, to the receivers-general, the number of which he had just increased from twelve to forty-eight. Some thirty-two millions of those rescripts, the payment of which had formerly been suspended by Terrai, were still in circulation. Instead of redeeming this depreciated paper from the sinking-fund, Calonne permitted the receivers-general to buy it up at a low rate, then redeemed it at par.

The first loan of Calonne and the fruits of his expedients were consumed. Fresh masses of gold were needed; but meanwhile the public had already become disenchanted. A work had been published during the interval, very inopportunist for the comptroller-general (the end of 1784),—Necker's book on the *Administration of Finance*,³ the work of the leisure of a fallen minister who was very desirous of retrieving his position, and of demonstrating his necessity to the public. This book, far from erring

¹ And to exceed the idea of Vanban, who only desired to excavate a harbor for thirty or forty ships near the locality called the *Fosse du Galet*. The gigantic plan of transforming the open roadstead of Cherbourg into a roadstead enclosed by an artificial island a league in length, which was to be made a league from the coast, was proposed by La Bretonnière, a captain of the navy, in 1777. His idea was adopted, but not his means of execution; and, after the peace of 1783, the construction of the prodigious dike was commenced, after the plan of the engineer Cessart.

² The India trade, which had so much declined, had increased from eight to twenty millions since the suppression of the monopoly.

³ Three volumes 8vo, bearing the imprint of no city.

through excessive boldness, indicated a mind already exceeded by the progress of events. Necker had not yet advanced beyond partial reforms compatible with the maintenance of privileges; yet the good sense and morality which characterized his views presented a contrast to what was being done in the comptroller-generalship, which none could fail to discern.¹ His plans concerning the modification of the funds and the collection of the taxes were very well received by that public opinion to which he was accustomed to appeal, and indulgence was shown to the excessive personality which rendered the introduction to his work almost nauseating. The King, on the contrary, was greatly displeased that Necker should have printed and circulated the book without permission. A very respectful letter which accompanied a presentation-copy did not reconcile him to the author; and it was for a moment in question of notifying Necker that he must leave France, and even of denouncing his book to the parliaments, as having violated the secrets of the State. The King did not decide to go so far; but the ex-minister was forbidden to reside in Paris.²

This did not regain Calonne the public favor, which was beginning to be alienated. A second loan of one hundred and twenty-five millions, arranged on a new plan, and attractive to the lenders, but very disadvantageous to the treasury,³ was registered by the parliament only after warm remonstrances, and by the express command of the King (December 30, 1784).⁴ This loan was popular at first, owing to its adroit distribution; but confidence soon declined, and various financial companies, the Bank of Discount, the Company of the Waters of Paris, and the Spanish Bank of St. Charles, carried on a formidable competition with the ministerial issues. The shares of these companies became the object of an unbridled stock-gambling. Calonne took the offensive by a decree

¹ There is an excellent refutation, in his book, of the principle of a single tax levied on real estate alone, desired by the physiocrats (t. I. ch. vi.). He also opposes, in a practical point of view, the more plausible idea of a single tax on the presumed capacities of each individual.

² Soulavie, *Mém. sur le règne de Louis XVI.*, t. IV. p. 281. He gives the original documents.

³ The loan was to be extinguished within twenty-five years by annual redemptions drawn by lot: the redemptions were to be accompanied with a progressive increase of the remaining capital, so that the last lenders in the twenty-fifth year received double the amount of their capital.

⁴ The provincial parliaments were beginning again to talk of the States-General: that of Besançon as early as July, 1783, before the time of Calonne; that of Bordeaux in January, 1785.

of the council which not only prohibited for the future, but annulled the past premium transactions in the stock dividends of the Bank of Discount (January, 1785); then launched against the stock-gamblers a powerful adversary, Mirabeau, who, by pamphlets marked with the energy and lucidity which he threw into every thing, lowered the artificial and immoderate price of stock. The Spanish government, the protector of the Bank of St. Charles, complained. Mirabeau was abandoned, and two of his writings were suppressed by decree of the council: but, at the same time, Calonne prosecuted the war against premium transactions, and declared all agreements null and void by which one party sold what he did not possess, and the other purchased without having the funds; that is, all gambling or bets on the rise or fall resolving themselves into the payment of the difference.¹ The decree of the council invalidated none of the transactions on time except those the titles of which should be deposited within the month of November (August 7). Calonne had exceeded his end. All the bankers, all the financiers, were engaged in the speculations which he proscribed. A panic declared itself: money suddenly became restricted, and the best paper could not be discounted for less than seven or eight per cent. The Bank of Discount refused to advance any more funds, and itself solicited assistance from the comptroller-general.

The one hundred and twenty-five million loan gained nothing thereby, and fell as much or more than the shares. Calonne vainly sought to disguise his embarrassment by redeeming, by way of braggadocio and without necessity, twenty-nine millions of stock-receipts on which the State was paying but five per cent interest (August, 1785). His efforts to revive the currency of the royal paper failed.² He was forced to retrace his steps; and, after aiding the bankers to weather the crisis, he relaxed the rigorous provisions of the decree of August 7 by a new decree (October 2, 1785), and appointed royal commissioners to make a kind of wholesale settlement between the sellers and the buyers in the transactions on time.³

¹ It must be confessed that the official character given to transactions on time on the part of the Bourse was not an indication of progress in public morality.

² He set to work very badly. "He intrusted, without the King's permission, nearly twelve millions' worth of assignments on the domains to friends who were to employ them in sustaining the public funds, and who, through ignorance, knavery, or negligence, caused the treasury to lose the greater part of it." — Droz, t. I. p. 437.

³ *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXIX. pp. 200, 249, 256; t. XXX. p. 1; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 7; *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 181, *et seq.*

Calonne had made his peace with the financiers, who saw the source of new profits in the increasing necessities of the treasury ; but he was unable to regain public favor once disenchanted, and he had at once against him the men of enlightenment and the suffering masses. Two rigorous winters, the second of which was followed by an excessive drought, had inflicted great wretchedness on the rural districts. The government encouraged the introduction of foreign cattle, interdicted the exportation of grain, authorized the peasants to pasture their cattle in the woods of the crown and the religious communities, and forbade the monopolization of forage : but these protective measures, which were not all equally dictated by sound political economy, were more than compensated for by the increased rigor of the prosecutions against the tax-payers ; and men saw with indignation the fiscal agents wresting the pence from the poor by violence, and neglecting their claims on the gold of the rich and the men in credit.¹

Through all the commotion made by Calonne, the ominous creaking of the financial machine was heard ; yet no reform of any kind occurred to distract the public attention. The parliament itself, so much opposed to innovation, at the instigation of a relative of Malesherbes, the President de Lamoignon, had presented to the King a memorial against the costs of law and the judges' fees (May, 1784) : the memorial of the parliament remained buried at Versailles. The year after, on the occasion of a suit which excited great interest, a magistrate of the parliament of Bordeaux, who had rendered himself illustrious at the bar before entering the parliamentary magistracy, the President Dupati, renewed, with the authority of his position, the attacks of the philosophers on secret trials, the isolation of the accused, and all our forms of criminal law. The memorial of Dupati having been published at Paris, the parliament, far outdone in its zeal for reform, commenced proceedings against the Bordeaux president. The King protected Dupati against the parliament ; but the criminal jurisprudence remained untouched (1785-1786).²

The government was proceeding to disruption at home with Calonne ; it was becoming enfeebled abroad with Vergennes. Before the end of the American War, various incidents had transpired in Europe which had been far from satisfying public

¹ Bailli, t. II. p. 261 ; *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXIX. p. 52.

² The writing of President Dupati called forth many others on the same subject. Among the authors is remarked, by the side of the name of Condorcet, that of Brissot de Warville.

opinion. For instance, at Geneva, from 1779 to 1782, the majority of the population having attempted to escape from the exclusive supremacy of a few families who dictated the law in the Council of the Two Hundred, and undertaken to interpret the Genevese constitution in a more democratic sense, the aristocracy appealed to the powers who had guaranteed the compact of 1739; that is, to France, Sardinia, and Berne. The three powers interfered by arms (June, 1782), threatened to attack Geneva, and forced the Genevese to return to the yoke of their patricians. The French public did not willingly see the party of Rousseau treated in this manner in his own city, and democracy stifled in Europe by the same hands that were aiding it to triumph in America. The Bourbon monarchy had cause to repent of it: a great number of Genevese, banished by their restored patricians, spread through England and France, and several among them figured among the most ardent promoters of the Revolution.

Some time before, Vergennes had been reproached for having suffered the House of Austria to establish itself on the Rhine by the election of the Archduke Maximilian to the coadjutorship of Cologne and Münster (1780). It would have been to the interest of France to concert with Prussia to prevent this choice: but Vergennes had not been free; he had been forced to yield to the ascendancy of the Queen.

Events of graver importance soon occurred on the Black Sea. One of the motives alleged by Vergennes for so eagerly hastening the peace with England had been the necessity of preparing to oppose the projects of Russia and Austria against the Ottoman empire. We have seen, that, in 1779, he had caused Turkey to consent, in order to obtain peace, to grant the Russians the free navigation of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, and all the Ottoman waters, the independence of the Tartars, and the reduction of the Ottoman suzerainty over Wallachia and Moldavia almost to a vain title; that is, greatly to exceed the concessions of the treaty of Kanardschy. It seemed as if the cabinet of Versailles should at least have felt itself obliged to insure respect to the new compact.

The conditions thereof were not for an instant observed. Catharine had no sooner made the Crimea independent than she labored to make it Russian: the one had been only the means of the other. She instigated a rebellion against the Khan of the Tartars, the partisan of Turkey, which compelled him to take flight, and caused a successor to be elected in his stead who sold his sovereignty to Russia (end of 1782). The Tartars rose in de-

fence of their nationality. They were overpowered by the Muscovite forces with frightful cruelties. The Russians slaughtered thirty thousand of these unfortunates, men, women, and children. Russian colonies were established in the Crimea : Taman and Kooban were occupied by Catharine's soldiers. The Czarina proceeded boldly towards her ends, sure as she was of Austria by a secret treaty. Since his mother's death, Joseph II. had given full scope to his double passion for internal reform and external invasion : on the one hand, he seemed in haste to precede France in the application of the doctrines taught by the French philosophers, without employing therein the prudently selfish caution which had been preserved by the great Frederick, his predecessor in this path ;¹ on the other, he endeavored to

¹ Maria Theresa had died in November, 1780.

² Under Maria Theresa herself, the current of the age had made some inroads upon the abuses of the Middle Ages. Ecclesiastics had been forbidden to be present at the drawing-up of wills. The right of asylum had been abolished, and the Inquisition suppressed in Milanais, as well as the monastic prisons. The nobility and the clergy had been subjected to a tax on real estate ; much less, it is true, than that paid by the *roturiers*. The peasants, oppressed by their lords, had been authorized to appeal to the sovereign courts. Scarcely had Maria Theresa closed her eyes, when Joseph gave himself full scope. He proclaimed a uniform judicial and administrative system throughout his empire, before which the national and provincial assemblies, the local laws, and the feudal jurisdictions, were to disappear. He prescribed the unity of taxation, and the suppression of tithes, *corvées*, and all personal tributes, and abolished primogeniture. Seconding and carrying to its farthest limit, in behalf of the State, the movement which was then leading the ecclesiastical princes and the German Catholic clergy to restrict the authority of the Pope (the movement of which Van Espen, Honthelm (*Febronius*), and Eybel were the theorists), he interdicted recourse to Rome for dispensations and reserved cases, and direct communication of the bishops with Rome ; reduced the revenues of the richest bishoprics ; suppressed some bishoprics, created others ; forbade all relations between monastic orders and foreign superiors ; suppressed more than two thousand convents, and kept only seven hundred, on condition that they devoted themselves to instruction ; increased the number of curés ; suppressed the seminaries superintended by the bishops ; forbade pilgrimages ; diminished the number of festivals ; caused a political and moral catechism to be composed for the youth ; imparted a great impulse to primary instruction ; instituted civil marriage ; authorized divorce in certain cases ; established equality before death by the uniformity of funeral ceremonies and of inhumation ; founded a multitude of hospitals, and asylums for orphans and poor children ; abolished the penalty of death, except for assassins ; established a regular and uniform military conscription ; and, lastly, instituted the liberty of worship by law, and the liberty of the press, at least in point of fact.

As has often been said, Joseph attempted in advance, in the Austrian States, almost all the social reforms which were to be accomplished by the Constituent Assembly in France, but not with the same success. The arbitrary will of a single man, attacking simultaneously ancient liberties and abuses, could not be equivalent to the action of a whole people upon itself. The Constituent Assembly, moreover, had to act upon a nation wherein it was only in question to consummate the natural unity, for which ages had paved the way. Joseph II., on the contrary, attempted to impose an artificial unity upon different peoples. He believed that he could *make* a nation, and failed

apply the very unphilosophical system of expediency, that is, of the right of the stronger, with as little scruple, but with much less ability, than Frederick had done. When the cabinet of Versailles attempted to dissuade him from uniting with Catharine against the Turks, he did not immediately acknowledge his compact with Russia, but let it be understood, that, in order to maintain the balance of power, he should be obliged "to extend his possessions in proportion to what Russia might acquire;" and showed himself insensible to the remonstrances of France on the immorality of this *monstrous system*.

The cabinet of Versailles then turned to Prussia, and entered into a negotiation with Frederick II. for the purpose of arresting the work of the reduction of the Ottoman empire. Nothing, however, was further from Vergennes' thoughts than a great war against Russia and Austria. He had abandoned in advance the chief point at stake, which was nothing less than the Crimea and the Kooban; that is to say, he consented for Russia to keep all she had taken, provided that Austria took nothing. Meanwhile, Joseph II. having signified to France his intention of supporting the Czarina, his ally, with one hundred and twenty thousand men, the French ambassador to Constantinople, Saint-Priest, was ordered to urge the Ottoman Porte to yield to the Russian demands. The Divan, no longer hoping for assistance, signed a new treaty, January 8, 1784, which ceded to Russia the sovereignty of the Crimea, the Island of Taman, and the Kooban. The Ottoman empire definitively lost its faithful vanguard of Little Tartary. The full possession of the Sea of Azof, and the decided preponderance in the Black Sea, were secured thenceforth to the Russians.

The prompt conclusion of the treaty disconcerted the pretensions of Joseph II., who was preparing to invade Wallachia and Moldavia, and who no longer had either the pretext or the power to act. "At least," said Vergennes, in endeavoring to justify his policy, — "at least the Emperor has obtained nothing; and the satisfaction of the court of St. Petersburg, which indeed weighs heavily on the Turks, is not prejudicial to France."¹ Vergennes strove to delude others, and perhaps himself, concerning the enormous concession wrung from him by the desire for peace.

The indifference and absolute inaction of England in the pres-

before this impossible work. — See the picture of his reign in the *Histoire de Joseph II.* by M. Paganel, 2d edition, 1853.

¹ Flissan, t. VII. p. 399; Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. pp. 64-80.

ence of the progress of Russia were perhaps more surprising than the weakness of France. Had Vergennes believed in the possibility of a reconciliation with the English, he would have probably been less yielding in the Levant.

The affair of Turkey was scarcely terminated, at least for a moment, when Joseph II., disappointed in the direction of the East, raised a new quarrel in the West. Towards the close of 1787, wearied of the humiliation of enduring the presence of foreign garrisons in his possessions in the Netherlands, he had sent back the Dutch troops from the places of the *Barrier*, become useless, according to him, since the alliance of the House of Austria with the Bourbons; and had caused the places fortified at great expense against France to be dismantled, except Luxembourg, Ostend, and the citadels of Antwerp and Namur. The Revolution was to profit by this operation in 1792! Holland vainly appealed to former treaties. Joseph went much farther: in 1784, after some encroachments by force, he summoned the United Provinces to cede to him Maëstricht, with various portions of territory on the Scheldt and the Meuse, and to pay him heavy indemnities for the undue enjoyment of these territories and for pretended debts; then, suddenly revealing his true aim, he offered to desist from his demands in consideration of the opening of the Scheldt, and the freedom of maritime commerce for his subjects of the Austrian Netherlands. The first pretensions of Joseph were absurd; the last, essentially contrary to positive law,—to law founded on treaties,—was in conformity with natural law, which was assuredly flagrantly violated by agreements which interdicted to the inhabitants on the banks of the Scheldt the use of the beautiful stream which God had given them. It may be said, however, that it was not for the head of an empire so artificial as Austria to appeal to natural law.

Be this as it may, Joseph determined to pay no attention to the refusal of Holland. He ordered two ships to attempt the passage of the Scheldt: the Dutch fired upon them, and forced them to strike their flag. The Emperor recalled his ambassador from the Hague. The Dutch invoked the assistance of France. Vergennes, who at that very moment was negotiating with the States-General a compact of alliance, to which he rightfully attached much importance, felt that it was necessary, at any price, to prevent the Dutch from throwing themselves into the arms of England; and induced the King to notify Vienna that France would oppose any aggression against the United Provinces (No-

vember, 1784). Two army-corps were assembled in Flanders and Alsace; but, at the same time, France made the Emperor new offers of mediation. Joseph accepted with a very bad grace: after long discussions, he reduced his pretensions to demanding satisfaction for the insult to his flag, some inconsiderable territorial cessions, and a pecuniary indemnity. This last clause well-nigh broke off the negotiations. The Dutch would only consent to give five million five hundred thousand florins: Joseph demanded ten. The cabinet of Versailles settled the question by paying the remaining four and a half millions. By this far from heroic expedient, a war was averted which would probably have become general, and have divided Europe into two camps.

On the same day of the definitive treaty between the Emperor and Holland, a defensive compact of alliance was signed between Holland and France (November 10, 1785).¹

The public was greatly shocked to see France once more paying Austria, and the Queen's unpopularity was thereby increased. This negotiation, however, had not been badly conducted; and success might have justified the government of Louis XVI., had it known how to maintain vigorously, and to carry out in good faith, the useful alliance which had just attached to France the Dutch republic, so long the instrument of England. Unhappily, nothing of the kind was done.

Vergennes, who erred generally by too much circumspection, was lacking in it on a grave occasion. In order, probably, to win the favor of the Queen, who complained of seeing him always opposed to her brother and her house, he suffered himself to be persuaded to favor a new design, by which the indefatigable Joseph II. sought to indemnify himself for his successive reverses. Joseph had returned to his favorite project of annexing Bavaria to Austria. Having been unable to obtain possession of it by force, he now aimed at procuring it by exchange. Catharine II., who was fully determined to resume the work of the dismemberment of Turkey, and who thought that she might again have need of the Emperor, strove, by zealously seconding him, to make him forget that she had not given him his share in the East. January 13, 1785, the Elector-Palatine, Duke of Bavaria, engaged to cede Bavaria to the Emperor in exchange for the Austrian Netherlands, the duchy of Luxembourg and the county of Namur excepted. With these two provinces, Joseph designed to pur-

¹ See the negotiation in Garden, *Hist. des Traités de paix*, t. V. pp. 52-71; and Flasseau, t. VII. pp. 399-410.

chase the consent of France. The Emperor promised his good offices to the Elector to obtain for him the title of *King of Burgundy*.¹ A Russian agent was commissioned to communicate the treaty of exchange to the heir presumptive of Bavaria, Duke Maximilian of Deux-Ponts (afterwards King of Bavaria), and to signify to him, that, if he refused his consent, it would be dispensed with. The Duke of Deux-Ponts refused as in 1778, and appealed to the courts of Versailles and Berlin. Frederick broke forth with such violence, that the French cabinet disavowed all participation in the Emperor's design, and entreated him to abandon it. For the fourth time, Joseph recoiled before the resistance roused by his ambition, and more than ever deserved the reputation of "the man who began every thing, and finished nothing."² But the matter did not stop there. Frederick determined to erect a barrier which would prevent the Emperor from renewing his attempts, and, greatly dissatisfied with the court of France, addressed himself to the King of England as Elector of Hanover. He organized, July 23, 1785, with the Electors of Hanover, Saxe, and Mayence, and the Princes of Mecklenburg, Hesse, Baden, etc., a confederation, for the purpose of maintaining the constitution of the Empire, the rights of the States, the family compacts, and the compacts of succession. The reconciliation of England and Prussia, which was at the bottom of this Germanic league, was a grave fact, and alarming to French interests, as was soon to be experienced. Never should the cabinet of Versailles have maintained views calculated to estrange Prussia, unless it was fully decided to pursue them to the end, which was neither its design, nor for the interest of France.³

In short, the French government was declining without, and was gradually losing the ground that it had regained by the American War. Within, it was rapidly drifting to ruin. Events, after having been so long hesitating and in suspense, were violently accelerated. Great scandals, the premonitory symptoms of catastrophes, assumed a strange and unheard-of character. The commotion caused by the bankruptcy of the Prince de Guémené was silenced by the far more scandalous trial of another prince of the same house, — the Cardinal de Rohan, Bishop of Strasbourg,

¹ It will be remembered that the Netherlands formed in the Empire the *Burgundian Circle*.

² *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 230.

³ Gardien, *Hist. des Traités de paix*, t. IV. pp. 269-282; Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. pp. 65-71.

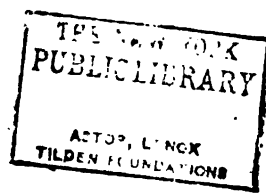


J. Bouchouille del.

ROHAN-GUÉMÉNÉ.

Né le 27 Septembre 1734.

par Michel Bouchouille



and Grand Almoner of the Crown. The cardinal's opponent in the suit was no less a personage than the Queen of France! On Assumption Day, August 15, the court thronged the gallery of Versailles: the service was about to begin, and the grand almoner was at hand, ready to repair to the chapel in his pontifical robes, when suddenly he was summoned to the King's apartments. He did not return; and the rumor was spread that he had set out for Paris, escorted by an officer of the body-guards. He was conducted to the Bastille! September 5, 1785, letters-patent of the King indicted the Cardinal de Rohan before the Great Chamber of the parliament, with a Countess de La Motte-Valois, the descendant of an illegitimate son of Henri II., as having been guilty of treason towards the royal majesty by usurping the name of the Queen, for the purpose of buying on credit, from the jewellers, a magnificent diamond necklace worth sixteen hundred thousand francs.

The clergy claimed the right of the accused to be tried by his peers, its order, and not by the secular magistracy. Rohan, who had at first himself demanded a trial by the parliament, retraced his steps, protested, and asked to be sent before the judges of the church. The Pope, in consistory, suspended Rohan from the prerogatives of the cardinalship because he had recognized the competence of the parliament, and restored him his honors only on being apprised of his tardy protest. The parliament took no notice of it, and retained the suit. It was the first time that the Roman purple had been humbled before the secular courts and the common law. A few years earlier, public opinion would have been wholly preoccupied with this great victory of the spirit of the age: but, since the abolition of the order of the Jesuits, Rome had scarcely been thought of; the public had its eye on the court rather than on the church, and paid little heed to the incidents of form, in its ardent curiosity thoroughly to investigate this astounding affair. In whatever manner the question might be put judicially, the public put it unhesitatingly between Rohan and Marie-Antoinette. The point in question was, to know whether the cardinal grand almoner had been guilty of a colossal swindling transaction; whether he had been the imbecile dupe of a female swindler (Madame de La Motte); or, lastly, whether he had really purchased the necklace secretly for the Queen, and by her orders, without the knowledge of the King. The readiness with which a multitude of people accepted the last of the three solutions, and drew the strangest inferences from it, may be judged

from the renown which numerous inconsistencies and ten years of defamation had given Marie-Antoinette. The Queen's personal hatred of the cardinal — a hatred which dated back to the epoch when she was the dauphiness, and he the ambassador to Austria¹ — was nevertheless well known : but it was thought that this hatred might have yielded to the repentance of Rohan, and to the passion which he had affected for Marie-Antoinette ; and that perhaps Madame de La Motte had really been the secret medium between the Queen and the cardinal. The documentary evidence in the suit proved that Rohan had in good faith believed himself in correspondence with the Queen through Madame de La Motte, and commissioned by her to purchase the necklace as a pledge of reconciliation.

The affair was brought to light through the jewellers, who, anxious at receiving no money, addressed themselves directly to Marie-Antoinette for payment. The Queen was at first stupefied, then exasperated : she complained to Louis XVI. ; and her violence would have proved to unprejudiced minds that her sentiments had not changed with respect to Rohan, and that she was not his accomplice. The Baron de Breteuil, the minister of the King's household,² an implacable enemy of Rohan through diplomatic rivalry, and the Abbé de Vermont, the ex-preceptor and confidential counsellor of Marie-Antoinette ; a preceptor who had taught her nothing, and a counsellor who never gave her any but pernicious advice ; the true Maurepas of Marie-Antoinette, as selfish and less sagacious than the fatal minister of Louis XVI., — Breteuil and Vermont, we say, also incited the Queen, and, through her, persuaded the King to apply the torch to that mine laid under the throne, which should have been stifled at any price. Feeble and disreputable governments can only prolong their existence by silence and obscurity. Nothing short of madness could have induced the government to open the sanctuary of the royal family to the transparent reticence of a judicial discussion and the malevolent comments of the populace, like the equivocal interior of a house of ill-fame ; and to put the honor of the crown at the discretion of the parliament, a body lately thrown down, then raised up

¹ The ambassador to Vienna in 1772, at the time of the partition of Poland (Rohan), well seconded, or rather directed, by his secretary, the ex-Jesuit Georgel, a man of wit and intrigue, had apprised his government of all that was about to be done, and had acquitted himself with considerable distinction in his functions ; but he had gained the hatred of Maria Theresa and Marie-Antoinette by intercepted letters, in which he spoke unfavorably of the young dauphiness.

² He had succeeded Amelot in the autumn of 1783.

conditionally by royalty, and more irritated at the outrage than grateful for the reparation.

This unhappy government committed one mistake after another. A few weeks after throwing itself into the hands of the parliament, it quarrelled with the latter on account of a third loan sent by Calonne for registration. The point in question was eighty millions of life-*rentes*, redeemable in ten years, and assigned on the aids and the salt-taxes; a last assistance, said the preamble of the edict, which would suffice "to effect the buying-up of the whole debt, and to reëstablish order in affairs." Such assertions awakened pity instead of delusion. The parliament unanimously entreated the King to withdraw the edict. The King replied by an express command to register it. The registration was made, but with modifications and explanations by which the parliament exonerated itself from the responsibility before the public. The parliament was summoned to Versailles, and the unqualified registration was enforced in a bed of justice (December 23, 1785). During the parleys which had preceded this authoritative measure, Calonne had personally estranged the first president, D'Aligre, and the most influential leaders of the company. The reaction was felt in the trial of the Cardinal de Rohan.

The *suit of the Necklace* was prolonged for nine whole months, without wearying the public expectation or curiosity. The injudicious implacableness employed by the confidential friends of the Queen, especially the minister Breteuil, in prosecuting the cardinal alone, and seeking to leave Madame de La Motte out of the discussion, finally turned public opinion in an inverse direction. Men forgot the just contempt long inflicted on this prelate, sunk in debauchery and burdened with debt, who could not understand, to use his own words, *how a gallant man could live on an income of twelve hundred thousand livres*, and who, in consequence, made up the deficiency of his revenue from his ecclesiastical dignities¹ from the funds of the grand almonry, paying his mistresses with the money designed for the relief of the poor. Instead of being indignant, they contented themselves with laughing at the effrontery of the Ex-Jesuit Georgel, the vicar-general of the grand almonry and the confidant of Rohan, who commenced a pastoral letter for Lent with the words, "Dearly beloved brethren, sent to you like the disciple Timothy to the people, whom Paul in his bonds could no longer teach," etc. What a Timothy, and what a Paul! . . . There was as little modesty on one side as on

¹ The bishopric of Strasburg alone yielded him four hundred thousand francs.

the other; on that of Breteuil as on that of the Rohans, who had sided with their relative, and who drew with them one of the branches of the royal house, the Condés, allied to the Rohans by the marriage of the Prince de Condé to a member of this family. These illustrious relatives of the accused, the princes and princesses of the houses of Condé and Rohan, according to the usages of criminal trials, ranged themselves in a line, clad in mourning, to salute the *gentlemen of the Great Chamber* on their way to the palace on the days when the court was in session, and "princes of the blood openly canvassed against the Queen of France."¹ The secret intrigues did still more than the public canvassing.

The decision was finally rendered May 31, 1786. The conclusions of the attorney-general, Joli de Fleuri, were that the cardinal should be bound, first, to declare to the chamber assembled that he had rashly meddled in the affair of the necklace, under the name of the Queen, and that he had more rashly believed in a nocturnal rendezvous given him by the Queen,² and to ask pardon of the King and Queen in the presence of the court; second, to resign the office of grand almoner; third, to abstain from approaching within a certain distance from the place where the court should be held, etc. These conclusions, too reasonable, at least with respect to the first points, could neither satisfy those who desired that Rohan should be condemned for robbery, nor those who aimed at stigmatizing the Queen by *honorably* acquitting Rohan from all the charges against him. The latter party prevailed! By a majority of five votes, the cardinal was unqualifiedly acquitted; while the Countess de La Motte and her husband, who had grossly duped Rohan, and carried on the whole negotiation concerning the necklace for the purpose of purloining the diamonds, were condemned to be whipped and branded, then to be sent, the wife to the Salpêtrière, and the husband to the galleys.

The parliament cruelly avenged its affront of 1771. The great powers of the ancient régime slew each other. The populace welcomed with delirious joy the decree which humiliated and degraded the throne: an ovation was given to the cardinal, and

¹ *Mém. Madame de Campan*, t. II. p. 286. Such at least is the story of Madame Campan. The *Memoirs of Bachaumont* (t. XXXII. p. 86) do not mention the presence of the Condés at the Palais.

² A rendezvous for a moment, in a thicket of Versailles, in which a woman who strongly resembled the Queen, posted by Madame de La Motte, played the part of Marie-Antoinette.

another to the celebrated thaumaturgist Cagliostro, who had been implicated in the suit through his intimacy with Rohan, and acquitted like him.¹ The Queen, transported with anger and indignation, caused Rohan to be exiled, by *lettre de cachet*, to the recesses of Auvergne; a trifling reprisal for a defeat which presaged so many others to royalty!

We have been unable to enter into the details of this long and confused affair. The impression that we receive from it is the impossibility of the Queen's guilt; but the more improbable were the imputations against her, the more characteristic was the credit accorded to these imputations, and the more it attested the moral ruin of the monarchy. The shadow of the Parc-aux-Cerfs still brooded over Versailles; and the terrible night of the 5th of October was destined subsequently to show that neither had the spectres of the Pact of Famine ceased to hover over the palaces of the kings.

A journey made by Louis XVI. to Normandy a few days after the conclusion of the fatal suit offered some compensation to the humiliated monarch. He was warmly received by the Norman population. The enterprise of Cherbourg, the worthy crowning work of the American War, was justly popular in the West; and there was a genuine burst of enthusiasm when the King, in the presence of the squadron and the multitude crowded in the shore-boats, on the strand, and on the immense granite amphitheatre which overlooks the shore, took his stand on one of the famous cones of M. de Cessac, already submerged in the open ocean, to witness the arrival and submersion of another of these cones, designed to form the dike.² Louis XVI. was recompensed at this moment for his zeal for the progress of the French marine: it was perhaps the only department in which he was truly the head of the State (the end of June, 1786).³

¹ *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 326; *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXII. pp. 85-91. The documents of the trial have been collected in two volumes 12mo; Paris, 1786.

² These were enormous basket frames, laden with stones. The frame was destroyed by the waves; but the stones remained as the foundation for the rock-work that was built up with masonry, and blocks of granite. This immense enterprise, suspended at times during our political storms, but always resumed with new ardor, has at length been finished after more than sixty years. Interesting details may be found in the *Memoirs of Dumouriez*, the commandant of Cherbourg from 1778 to 1788, t. I. ch. v.

³ A series of ordinances on the marine had just improved the régime of classes, and suppressed the company of the marine guards, the nucleus of so many abuses, and of so fatal a spirit of fraternity, and had replaced it by pupils of the naval school, January 1, 1786.—*Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 123.

These were his last bright days. A sad revelation awaited his return to Versailles. Calonne was at the end of his financial orgy. During the parleys with the parliament for the last loan of eighty millions (in December, 1785), and while waiting for the opening of this loan, Calonne had secretly negotiated *rentes* to the amount of nearly one hundred millions on the loans of 1781 and 1782, which were already full, and thus obtained one hundred and twenty-three millions. Such a resource could not be repeated. The third twentieth was about to expire at the close of 1786, and to diminish the revenue twenty-one millions more. The parliament was not disposed to lend itself to the extension of this tax, and the disposition of the public mind rendered an authoritative measure very uncertain. Credit was expiring.¹ The resources of charlatanism were exhausted: the last expedients to which it was possible to have recourse could not insure the working of the governmental machinery beyond a few months. The car must inevitably stop, and be broken by the shock. To save it by the route of the Cardinal Dubois and the Abbé Terrai was no longer possible: the government was no longer strong enough for bankruptcy; and justice demands the admission, that Louis XVI., even if he had had the strength for this, would not have had the will.

Calonne determined to confess the real situation, first to Vergennes, then to the King.

Since the dismissal of Turgot, that is to say, within ten years, the government had expended sixteen hundred millions of extraordinaries, thirteen hundred and thirty-eight millions of which had been obtained by means of loans on *rentes*,² and the rest by advances and the creation of offices. During the three years of Calonne's administration, in time of peace, the annual deficit had increased thirty-five millions; although the public revenues had increased one hundred and forty millions since the administration of Turgot, partly by the natural increase of the receipts, and partly by new taxes, and additions to the old ones. France paid

¹ The assignments on the public revenues were negotiated with difficulty at from nine to ten per cent discount.

² Four hundred and forty millions under Necker, from 1776 to 1781; four hundred and eleven millions under Joli de Fleuri and D'Ormesson, from 1781 to 1783; and four hundred and eighty-seven millions in the midst of peace under Calonne, from 1783 to 1786. In these four hundred and eighty-seven millions is included a loan of thirty millions contracted by the city of Paris on the King's account, in September, 1786. Calonne had besides forestalled the revenues to the amount of seventy-nine millions.

the crown and the privileged orders about eight hundred and eighty millions a year in taxes of all kinds, the *corvées* included, without counting a great part of the feudal rights, which we have no means of estimating.¹ Of these eight hundred and eighty millions, five hundred and ten were levied in the name of the King, instead of the three hundred and seventy that were levied in the time of Turgot: but, deducting seventy-six millions for the expenses of the collection by the government, two hundred and twenty-four for *rentes*, salaries, and interests on securities and other preferred debts, and twenty-seven for the part of the pensions assigned directly on the treasury, there remained but one hundred and eighty-three millions for the expenses of the State; and three-fourths of this trifling remnant of so many tributes would be swallowed up in the gulf of the royal orders on the treasury.²

Calonne commenced, therefore, by disclosing to the King some clouds in the horizon. He acknowledged, in general terms, a former deficit, not mentioned in the *Official Report* of Necker, and which he himself had been compelled to increase; then in a written memorial, after calling to mind the *frightful situation of the finances* at the epoch when the King intrusted them to him, and the success of his first efforts to retrieve them, he openly declared that "the present moment concealed a terrible embarrassment under the show of the happiest tranquillity, and that France was only sustained by a kind of artifice. It is necessary," he says, "speedily to resolve on a course that will decide the fate of the State. There exists an annual deficit of one hundred millions.³ It is impossible to fill up so prodigious a gulf except by extraordinary means. These means should not increase the weight of the taxes, which must even be diminished. The plan which I have formed," he adds, "appears to me the only one that can solve so difficult a problem. I dare believe that none vaster, or more worthy to render your reign illustrious, and to secure the prosperity of your empire, has been conceived. . . . It will be, perhaps, the work of six months, or a year at most."⁴

The plan announced in such pompous terms was presented to the King, August 20, 1786. Without admitting that Calonne

¹ Bailli, in 1830, estimates these eight hundred and eighty millions in 1786 at more than twelve hundred millions: at the present time, they might be estimated, perhaps, at fifteen or sixteen hundred millions.

² Bailli, t. II. pp. 263-266.

³ He said afterwards, one hundred and fourteen.

⁴ See the Memorial, ap. Soulavie, t. VI. p. 117.

Vergennes, consulted by Calonne, in order to soften in advance his adverse influence on the King, bowed his head before the appalling figures presented by the comptroller-general. Louis XVI. said with astonishment, "But this is pure Neckerism which you are giving me!"—"Sire," was the reply, "in the state of things, I can give you nothing better."

The logical response of the King would have been to dismiss Calonne, and to recall Necker. The idea of this did not enter Louis' mind; and Calonne, parodying Turgot, made the King promise him a steadfast support in the great things which he was about to undertake to save the monarchy.

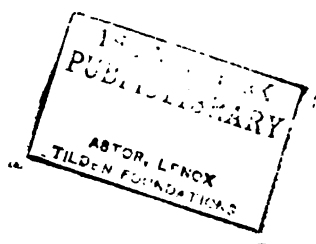
It was necessary to insure against surprise from any external embarrassment during this vast operation. The death of Frederick the Great, who had just expired, after filling Europe with his name and influence for half a century (August 17, 1786),¹ and the inconsistent character of his successor, Frederick William II., might give rise to unforeseen complications. Vergennes did his best to provide for the necessities pointed out by his financial colleague. By an article of the treaty of 1783, the governments of France and England were pledged to conclude a commercial treaty. During three years, Vergennes had evaded the execution of this article: he hastened its conclusion in order to bind the interests of England to the preservation of peace, and the treaty was signed September 26.

The success was complete as to the end which we have just indicated: the interests of England were secured to the maintenance of peace. It remains to be known whether the interests of France received the same satisfaction.

The commercial treaty contained some general stipulations worthy of praise. In case of war between the two nations, the merchants could reside at liberty within the respective States, or at least have a year's delay to arrange their business. Letters of reprisal, true relics of the *private warfare* of the Middle Ages applied to international relations, were abolished. The English renounced their extravagant maxims against the rights of neutrals,

soundly judged the ministries of Turgot and Necker, has been too much carried away by the reaction, nevertheless very moral, against historic fatalism. If there was a time "when the French Revolution might have been prevented and directed," this time had past, in our opinion, at the epoch which our narrative has reached.

¹ His last important act had been the complete civil emancipation of the Jews (July, 1786). Mirabeau, during his visit to Prussia, had had the honor of contributing to this resolution of Frederick by a memorial on the illustrious Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, and on the political reformation of the Jews.





Engraved by J. Porceddu

ARKWRIGHT.

From a Picture by Wright of Derby

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

London: Published by Charles Knight, Ludgate Street.

and admitted that the flag covers all merchandise that is not contraband of war, and that articles adapted to the construction and rigging of ships are not contraband.

As to the merchandise and produce of the two countries, French wines were assimilated to Portuguese wines, with respect to duties, in England; the duties on vinegar were reduced more than one-half; the duties on brandies were diminished; the olive oil of France was assimilated to that of the most favored nations; millinery, mirrors, and various fancy articles, paid a duty of only twelve per cent. By way of compensation, the duties on woollen and cotton fabrics, and on crockery and earthen ware, were reduced to the same rate of twelve per cent; the duties on hardware, to ten per cent; and those on saddlery, to fifteen per cent. All fabrics of silk, or mixed with silk, continued to be prohibited in England; while none of the principal articles of English manufacture remained interdicted in France.

The consequences, necessarily, were complex. During the year that followed the treaty, the bureau of foreign affairs was constantly in the receipt of letters of thanks from Guienne and Lanquedoc, and letters of complaint from Picardy and Normandy.¹ The proprietors of vineyards and olive plantations, and the manufacturers of articles of taste at Paris, were jubilant; while the manufacturers struggled laboriously, or closed their shops. Upon the whole, England exported to France twice as much merchandise as she received therefrom. It has been affirmed that the spirit of emulation would have speedily revived our manufactures. This is very doubtful. Not only would the superiority of the capital accumulated in English manufactures have enabled our rivals to make great sacrifices in order to crush out competition, but the application of steam to the arts and manufactures, as a universal motive-power, by Watt and Arkwright, was speedily to decuple, and even to centuple, the productive force of England; and, had not the commercial treaty been broken by the Revolution, it is probable, that, before the French manufacturers had been able to appropriate these great innovations, they would have been borne down for a long space of time.²

¹ Flassan, t. VII. p. 428.

² The discovery of Watt, the successful continuer of our Papin, dates from 1769 in theory, and from 1776 in practice. From 1782, its full importance began to be appreciated. — See the *Éloge historique de J. Watt*, by M. Arago, in the *Annuaire du Bureau des longitudes* de 1839. — See, concerning this treaty, Bailli, t. II. p. 247; Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 296; Flassan, t. VII. pp. 421-430; *Revue des Deux Mondes*, t. XXIV. p. 642, 1843; *De la politique commerciale de Angleterre*, by

A few months after, another commercial treaty, which was wholly advantageous, and devoid of economic objections, but which had the political objection of being likely to estrange the Turks from us, was concluded with Russia (January, 1787).¹

Vergennes had averted the perils from without: it now remained for Calonne to devise means for the execution of the reformation within. To secure the coöperation of the parliaments was impossible: the most violent resistance to the diminution of privileges might be expected on their part. To enforce unqualified reformation by repeated beds of justice was too stern a course for this worn-out and feeble government. Calonne deemed it indispensable to appeal to public opinion in an official form, and to seek for the throne a point of support in the nation. The name of the States-General would have terrified the King. Calonne devised a middle course: he reminded the King and Vergennes of the assemblies of Notables, convoked at different epochs, as a kind of great council extraordinary, chosen by the sovereign from the élite of the nation, and whose advice was taken on a definite subject. Vergennes disliked any kind of assemblies; but Calonne succeeded in persuading him that it was the only means of preventing all parliamentary resistance, and of averting the complaints of the clergy against the territorial subsidy. As to Louis XVI., he was fascinated by the idea of imitating Henri IV. after the League, and did not even suspect the dif-

E. Forcade. A very singular debate on the subject of the treaty of 1786 took place in the English parliament. Pitt, at that time minister, and Fox, the leader of the Opposition, both held a language absolutely contrary to the respective policy which they afterwards followed, and which they personified in history. Fox, subsequently so well disposed towards France, opposed all reconciliation between the two nations with extreme violence; and Pitt, who was to be a more implacable enemy to France than his father himself, protested in the most philanthropic and philosophical terms against the prejudice which makes one nation the natural and necessary enemy of another, which was, according to him, to *calumniate human nature*. It is true that he explained his philanthropy by demonstrating that the advantage of this new friendship would be wholly in favor of England. As to Fox, he was not completely inconsistent: it was the monarchy of Louis XIV. that he hated in France, and the Revolution that he loved.

¹ This treaty was analogous to that which England had with Russia, the renewal of which was prevented by the compact between Russia and France. The latter treated each other reciprocally on the footing of the most favored nations. The duties on the merchandise of the two countries were greatly reduced on both sides. The right of *aubaine* was abolished. The rights of neutrals were proclaimed anew, on the terms upon which they had just been recognized by England herself; with the addition of the clause, that vessels under escort could not be subjected to search. In consequence of this compact, Marseilles established fruitful relations with the Black Sea, where the Russians had not yet adopted an exclusive and prohibitory system. The war of the Revolution soon interrupted these relations. — See Flasseau, t. VII. pp. 430-439.

ference that existed between a victorious hero ending a revolution, and a feeble prince about to open one infinitely vaster and more profound. None of the three personages who decided upon the convocation of the NOTABLES comprehended that this assembly, having no representative character, would be absolutely without authority as to what was expected from it; that, as soon as they entered upon assemblies, the Notables were only calculated to serve as an ante-chamber to the States-General; and that, if the States-General had become inevitable, not a day, not an hour, should be lost in convoking them. Each hour lost made the abyss deeper.

A man more clear-sighted than the King and the two ministers had suggested to Calonne both the idea and the plan of the convocation of the Notables, if his correspondence is to be believed; but Mirabeau was quite sure that this convocation would closely precede that of the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.¹

The memorial on the plan and the form of the Notables was presented to the King by Calonne about December 15. The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, had alone been taken into the secret after Vergennes. The Queen herself knew nothing of it till the day when the plan was communicated to the council, and the ordinance of convocation decreed (December 29). Marie-Antoinette preserved a lively spite towards Calonne for this. In the comptroller-general's memorial to the King is observed the following sentence: "The succession of time and the revolution of events seem to have brought about the moment when the monarchy, long agitated, has finally attained the point of *tranquillity* and *maturity* which permits it to improve its constitution."² . . . The poor King had been so much fascinated with the fine phrases of the minister, that he wrote to him, the morning after the session of the council, "I have been unable to sleep all night; but it was for pleasure!" The innocence of the King and the fatuity of the minister ended in the same insane confidence.

The Notables were convoked at Versailles, to assemble January 29, 1787. They numbered one hundred and forty-four, seven

¹ *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. pp. 339-340. His father, the aged physiocrat, judged the Notables very well in his fashion. "This man (Calonne) assembles a flock of *bullies*, orders them to take the bull by the horns, and says to them, 'Gentlemen, we take every thing, and more too; we eat every thing, and more too: we wish to devise means of obtaining this *more too* from the rich, whose money has nothing in common with that of the poor; and we warn you that you are the rich. Now give us your advice as to the manner.'" — *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 492.

² See the Memorial in Soulavie, t. VI. p. 30. It was wished to do something while waiting for the Notables; and, November 6, a decree of the council prescribed the trial for three years of a plan for the conversion of the *corvée* into a pecuniary prestation.

of whom were princes of the blood; fourteen archbishops and bishops; thirty-six dukes and peers, marshals of France, and gentlemen; twelve counsellors of State, and masters of requests; thirty-eight first presidents, attorney-generals, and other magistrates of the sovereign courts; twelve deputies from the *pays d'États*, four of whom were from the clergy, six from the nobility, and two from the Third Estate; and twenty-five municipal officers. The true Third Estate, the great body of the non-privileged persons, was only represented, in these hundred and forty-four Notables, by six or seven municipals: all the rest were nobles, or had the privileges of nobility. Among the persons convoked, several prelates and gentlemen, indeed, were known for their philosophical and reformatory opinions. Among the noble names shone that of La Fayette; but one must have been strongly inclined to illusions to believe that the sentiments of La Fayette could be those of the majority. All of these privileged personages piqued themselves on being enlightened men: the greater part would have conceded in theory almost all that was demanded by the spirit of the age; but, in practice, very few were disposed to sacrifice their privileges.

However this may be, it was an extraordinary political assembly in a country which had witnessed none for a century and a half.¹ Men felt, that, if this was not a solution, it was a beginning. Thence proceeded the alarm of the court, and the restless expectation of the public. The courtiers, suddenly awakened from the smiling dream in which they had been lulled by a too seductive enchanter, beheld with stupefaction and anger the hand raised to strike that had lavished so many caresses on them. The aged Marshal de Richelieu, that centenary personification of all the vices of despotism, asked what penalty Louis XIV. would have inflicted on a minister who should have proposed to him to assemble the Notables. The young Viscount de Ségur said, "*The King has given in his resignation.*" The public hoped in proportion to the dismay of the court: it had no more confidence in the firmness of the King than in the morality of the minister: it strongly suspected that Calonne appealed to the phantom of a national representation, only because he was at the end of his resources, and that he merely wished to obtain money; but it comprehended this,—*Versailles is falling, France is rising.* A characteristic incident occurred: The government had sent to the *Journal de*

¹ Since the Notables of 1626, under Richelieu.

*Paris*¹ a note announcing the convocation of the Notables. "The nation," said this note, "will see with transport that its sovereign *deigns* to approach it." This servile expression produced so disturbing an effect, that the government caused it to be suppressed in another journal (the *Petites-Affiches*).²

Calonne, enamoured of himself, had not the least instinct of the real situation. He counted on being welcomed with acclamations by the Notables and the nation. He celebrated his certain triumph in advance by plunging into every kind of pleasure. The day of the assembly drew near, and nothing was ready: he attempted to repair his indolence by forced labor; fell ill; and, from one delay to another, three weeks elapsed between the day fixed by the letters of convocation and the effective opening of the assembly. This was much worse for the comptroller-general than the loss of time. The opposition had full leisure to reconnoitre the position, and to organize. The men of the most advanced opinions were not those from whom Calonne had the most to fear; at least, in the beginning. La Fayette was by no means hostile in disposition: he was disposed to accept whatever might be proposed that was reasonable, and even to consent to loans, and to vote some provisional taxes. He did not aim at enforcing the immediate convocation of the States-General, but only at obliging the King, before giving him aid, to recognize *certain constitutional principles*. At present, to establish provincial assemblies, to abolish the shackles on commerce, and to restore a civil status to Protestants; and, in a near-approaching future, to arrive at a national assembly,—such were, at the beginning of 1787, the very moderate wishes of the friend of Washington.³ The most dangerous adversaries of Calonne were neither the men who desired more than he, nor those who desired less, or desired nothing at all: they were those who desired the same things, but who wished to do them in his place. Perfidious as he had formerly been to La Chalotais, Calonne, on this occasion, showed an unsuspecting trust: perfidy and unsuspectingness proceeded in him from the same cause,—inconsistency. He should have known that a man important through position, and formidable through the spirit of intrigue,—the Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne,—had long aspired to the ministry; yet not only had he caused Brienne to be summoned to the assembly, which was

¹ The first daily sheet published in France; established in 1777.

² *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXIII. p. 313; XXXIV. p. 1.

³ *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. pp. 167–198.

unavoidable, but had suffered him to surround himself with the personages most disposed to serve him as auxiliaries. He thus paved the way for a coalition between the men who rejected all reform and those who rejected reform from the hands of Calonne. The nobles, devoid of the spirit of fraternity, if not of the spirit of caste, had not intrigued in advance; but the members of the two great bodies of the clergy and the magistracy had agreed to act in concert, in the majority.

They did not lack grievances! At the very moment that the Notables assembled, Calonne consummated the annihilation of credit. He forced the stockholders of the Bank of Discount to *entreat* the King to *permit* them to pay in a security of EIGHTY MILLIONS, as a new guarantee offered to the public! Calonne had the *moderation* to accept only seventy millions. This enormous disbursement, which attests the great growth which the bank had attained, but which drained it dry, was followed by a general panic, which, from the stock of the bank, extended to all the paper in circulation. This was a fine inauguration of the Notables!

The death of Vergennes (February 13, 1787), after an illness aggravated by anxiety, also contributed to weaken the government, ready to fall. This minister, in default of great capacities, had many second-class qualities, and that respect which is obtained by circumspect characters in a long exercise of power. Vergennes was replaced by the Count de Montmorin, an honest man, but entirely inferior to the situation.

The King opened the assembly, February 22, in the Hôtel des Menus, at Versailles. The cry of "*Long live the Queen!*" had long since ceased: this time there was not a single cry of "*Long live the King!*" from the immense multitude that thronged to witness the passing of the cortège.¹

The King briefly informed the Notables that he desired their counsel on great and important projects for the purpose of "ameliorating the revenues of the State, insuring their entire liberation by a more general apportionment of the taxes, freeing commerce from the shackles which obstructed transit, and relieving, as far as circumstances permitted, the most indigent portion of his subjects." The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, delivered a somewhat bombastic harangue: after which, Calonne, in a cavalier tone, entered upon a long speech, from which he expected a prodigious effect; a brilliant, witty, and injudicious discourse, which offended the audience from the first sentence:—

¹ *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXIV. p. 207.

"Gentlemen, I am the more honored by what is commanded of me at this moment, inasmuch as the views and the motives, a summary of which the King charges me to present to you, have become entirely his own."

To signify from the beginning, to the assembly, that the views of the minister were entirely those of the King, was, in some sort, to close the discussion in advance.

Calonne continued by the triumphant panegyric of his administration. He extolled himself for every virtue, even that of economy; only this was not a harsh, severe, and parsimonious economy, like that of M. Necker,—whom he designated clearly enough without naming him,—but a broad economy, with a smiling visage and pleasing exterior, which did more than the other, while showing itself less. After this brilliant picture, he was nevertheless forced to confess that the knowledge which had been obtained of the real state of the finances, owing to the admirable order which the minister had established therein, presented nothing satisfactory, and that the annual deficit was considerable. This had existed for centuries: the receipts had never equalled the expenditures under Louis XV. The deficit, which had increased to more than seventy-four millions before the Abbé Terrai, still amounted to thirty-seven millions when M. Necker took the direction of the finances: it had necessarily increased under M. Necker, on account of the war; and had amounted to eighty millions at the close of 1783, independent of a floating debt of six hundred millions. It had also since increased; Calonne did not say how much. "It is impossible," he added, "to leave the State in the unceasingly imminent danger to which it is exposed by such a deficit as that which exists; it is impossible to continue to have recourse every year to palliatives and expedients, which, by retarding the crisis, can only render it the more fatal. We cannot always borrow; we can no longer increase the taxes; we can forestall no more; and to economize would not suffice. What remains to supply all that is lacking, and to procure all that is needed for the restoration of the finances?"

"*The abuses!*—yes, gentlemen, in the abuses themselves is found a source of wealth which the State has a right to reclaim, and which should serve to reestablish order. . . . The abuses are defended by interest, credit, fortune, and *antique prejudices* which time seems to have respected; but what can their vain consideration avail against the public good and the necessities of the State? The abuses which it is now in question to annihilate for the public

safety are the most considerable, the best protected,— those which have the deepest roots and the most wide-spread branches. . . . Such are those which weigh upon the productive and laborious class; the abuses of pecuniary privileges, the exceptions to the common law; . . . the general inequality in the apportionment of the subsidies, and the enormous disproportion which is found between the taxes of the different provinces and between the burdens of the subjects of the same sovereign, etc. If so many abuses, *the subjects of eternal censure*, have resisted until now the proscription of public opinion, and the efforts attempted by administrators to remedy them, it has been because men have sought to effect by partial operations what could only succeed by a general operation. The views which the King desires to communicate to you, all tend to this end: they are neither a new system nor a new invention, but the summary, and, so to speak, the rallying-together, of the projects of public utility conceived for a long time past by the ablest statesmen."

He then explained why it had been impossible at previous epochs to arrive at this system of uniformity, this unity of the kingdom, which the time had come to establish. In this picture of the past, he styled the reign of Louis XIV. "that brilliant reign, in which the State was impoverished by victories, *while the kingdom was depopulated by intolerance*."

After condemning the system of privileges on which ancient society reposed, the organ of the crown condemned the Catholic system, the maintenance of which Louis XVI. had nevertheless sworn at his coronation, in the oath to exterminate heretics. This striking disavowal of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes attested that the government was resolved to repair, at least in part, the great iniquity of 1685. The design was fixed, indeed, to restore a civil status to the Protestants, and to replace tolerance in fact, by the recognition of their rights.¹ The parliament had taken the lead as early as the close of 1778, and had resolved upon the presentation of a request to the King for the authentication of marriages, births, and deaths of non-Catholics. Louis XVI., through the influence of the clergy, had prevented the *Company* from carrying out this resolution, which he approved at heart: but, since that time, public opinion had become so imperative that it could no longer be disregarded; and the parliament had

¹ For more than twenty years, the parliaments had established the custom in jurisprudence of declaring *non-admissible* whatever attacked the legitimacy of children born of Protestant marriages.

just promulgated, February 2, 1787, the request resolved upon in December, 1778, in order to deprive the ministry of the honor of the initiative.¹

Calonne terminated his harangue by announcing the establishment of assemblies of three degrees, commissioned to apportion the public burdens in the provinces which had no Provincial Estates; ² the substitution for the twentieths of a territorial impost, including ecclesiastical property; the suppression of the capitation-tax with respect to the members of the first orders; and the various other measures which we have already mentioned in analyzing the plan of the comptroller-general.

The importance of this session and of the speech of Calonne was incalculable. The frivolous personality of the man rendered the gravity of the facts so much the more striking. He seemed like one of those vulgar Pythonesses, the sport of the internal god, who at times uttered fateful words without wishing or comprehending them. From this day commenced the REVOLUTION. The death-sentence of the ancient régime was signified to it by the very power that was at the head of this régime. A return was no longer possible.

The impression on the Notables was very different from what Calonne had hoped. The men of the past were as much irritated as dismayed. The partisans of progress were in no wise satisfied. This braggart tone, these shameless vaunts, these forced and incomplete confessions, the absence of probity which was felt in this parody of Turgot, had offended the most conciliatory: no one was disposed to yield without strict guarantees.

The next day (the 23d), in a second session, presided over by *Monsieur* (Louis XVIII.), Calonne expounded in detail the first part of his plan, and read six memorials upon the provincial assemblies, the territorial impost, the redemption of the debts contracted by the clergy for the payment of their gratuitous offerings,³

¹ La Fayette had labored very actively since 1785 to prepare for this day of justice: aided by Malesherbes, he had gained over two of the ministers, Castries and Breteuil; and the latter had instigated the work of Ruhlière (*Éclaircissements sur les causes de la Révocation de l'édit de Nantes*), which was, as it were, the preface to the reparative measures. — See *Éclaircissements*, etc., and *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. pp. 121, 180.

² We have seen that it was his aim to establish uniformity in this respect, and to abolish the Provincial Estates; but he, as yet, concealed this intention. Whatever concerned the assemblies of three degrees had been suggested to him by the framer of Turgot's great municipal plan himself, Dupont de Nemours, whom he had summoned to his side as chief clerk of finance.

³ Calonne designed that the clergy should liberate themselves by means of alienations.

the villain-tax, the grain-trade, and the *corvée*. He reiterated his words of the day before, and enforced them by dwelling on all the inconsistencies, disorders, and injustice of the fiscal system, almost in the same terms that had been employed by the most aggressive writers. He had burned his ships. He wished to render resistance impossible, and made known from this day his intention of publishing the memorials presented to the Notables.¹

The assembly had been divided into seven bureaux, presided over by the King's two brothers, the Duke of Orleans,² the three princes of the branch of Condé, and the Duke de Penthièvre, the grandson of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan.³ The ministry had decided that each bureau should count as one vote; a very objectionable procedure, which might cause a purely nominal majority to prevail over the real majority. From the opening of the deliberations, the members of the sovereign courts and the deputies of the *pays d'États* signified that they could only give their personal opinion, and that they had no power to pledge their orders or their companies. This was coming directly to the point. The Notables showed themselves, in general, favorably disposed to the establishment of the provincial assemblies, although with very grave restrictions as to the form,⁴ and less friendly to the parish and district assemblies; that is, they applauded whatever was advantageous to the aristocratic element in the views of the government. The majority demanded that the presidency of the assemblies should not be given to the seniors or to the largest tax-payers, as was projected by the government, but that the presidents should be chosen exclusively from the privileged orders. It offered, indeed, a concession to the Third Estate by way of compensation; namely, that the representatives of the latter should equal in number those of the first two orders together.⁵ The debate grew far more animated when the territorial subsidy was reached. A generous minority loudly approved the attack on the privileges; and the majority dared not openly support them in opposition to public opinion, which it dreaded far

¹ See the two sessions in the *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 180; Paris, Plon, 1847.

² Afterwards *Philippe-Egalité*. His father had died November 18, 1785.

³ The son of the Count de Toulouse.

⁴ The majority judged the blending of the orders *unconstitutional*, and contrary to the essence of monarchy.

⁵ The privileged classes were far from calculating the importance of this concession. This was the origin of the famous *doubling of the Third Estate*, which was productive of such great consequences in circumstances much more decisive. Two bureaux went so far as to propose that the Third Estate should have two votes out of three.

more than the government. The cause of the past had fallen into such disrepute, that it dared no longer avow its existence. The majority, unable to defend itself, assumed the offensive. It put forward the very just proposition, that a new tax should not be voted without knowing exactly the receipts and expenditures, and the extent and nature of the deficit. The sincere partisans of progress approved what they would have asked on their side, and all the bureaux demanded information of the *true statement of the finances*. The eldest of the King's brothers had instigated this demand: he showed himself hostile to Calonne, as he had been to Turgot, to Necker, and to all the reformers; but he was beginning a new part in endeavoring to combine the defence of the privileged interests with an affectation of popularity.¹

Calonne refused the information demanded. The King, he said, desired the opinion of the Notables on the best means of providing for the necessities of the State, and not on the extent of these necessities, which was sufficiently authenticated in his councils. The bureaux persisted. Calonne endeavored to bend the opposition of Brienne and some other influential prelates, — those who were styled the *administrator* bishops, because they were men of business much more than of religion, and because they had enlightenment, no prejudices, and little more belief. Certain of these orators of the bureaux were disposed to compound with the ideas of the minister, but not with his person. He was repulsed. He addressed himself to a greater number of important men: he induced the King to appoint a meeting of forty-two members of the assembly, six from each bureau, on March 2, at the residence of *Monsieur*; presented them with memoranda of the receipts and expenditures; attacked by figures the accuracy of Necker's Official Report; and acknowledged that the annual deficit had reached one hundred millions, without counting twelve millions necessary to provide for unforeseen necessities.² Upon the assertions of the minister, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, M. de Cicé, declared that neither confidence nor credit could revive until France should have been informed by an exact verification whether it was M. Necker or M. de Calonne who had deceived the King, and until justice should have been done to the

¹ See in Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution*, t. II. p. 186, some curious details concerning the dream of the reconstruction of feudalism cherished for some time by *Monsieur*.

² He acknowledged shortly afterwards, instead of a hundred and twelve, a hundred and fourteen or fifteen millions.

criminal. Calonne having affirmed in the discussion that the King had the right to levy taxes at his pleasure, and that this principle would be contested by no one present, lively murmurs were raised; and the Archbishop of Narbonne, Dillon, strongly protested against the assertion. The Archbishop of Arles, Dulau, doubted whether any other assembly than the States-General had the right to vote taxes. The wit and talent for discussion displayed by Calonne ended only in a complete defeat. The meeting declared itself opposed to the territorial impost, and continued to demand a statement of the financial condition.

The next day, the King notified the bureaux that they were summoned to deliberate, not upon the existence of the territorial tax, which was a thing decided on, but upon its form. The bureaux replied, that, if it was impossible to dispense with the establishment of the tax, it should be collected in money, and not in kind. They insisted more strongly than ever on the statement of the receipts and expenditures, in order to be able to fix the quota, and, if possible, the duration of the impost. They would only permit it as a transient aid. While rejecting in fact, like the rest, equality in taxation, the first bureau, presided over by *Monsieur*, piqued itself on generosity, and refused the exemption from the capitation-tax offered to the privileged classes. All the bureaux demanded the integral maintenance of the rights and privileges of the provinces and the different bodies, thus protesting against the *uniform régime* announced by the minister.¹ Some members continued to oppose the territorial impost, but through motives of a different kind from those of their colleagues. The attorney-general of the parliament of Aix, the old brother-in-arms of La Chalotais in the war against the Jesuits, M. de Castillon, signalized himself by lofty words.

"There is no legal power," he said, "which can authorize the territorial impost as it is proposed; neither this assembly, . . . nor the parliaments, nor the particular States, nor the King himself: the States-General would alone have the right to do this."²

A second general session was held, March 12, under the presidency of *Monsieur*. Calonne presented the second part of his

¹ Brittany had been greatly agitated on learning that it was wished to increase the tax on salt in the districts which were not subject to the compulsory salt-tax, and to diminish it in the districts in which the latter existed; and the government had promised that Brittany should pay no more than in the past.

² Concerning the discussions of the bureaux, see *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXIV. pp. 215-260; Droz, t. I. p. 482.

plan, concerning the freedom of internal transit, the duties relative to commerce, the salt-tax, etc. To abolish the internal customs and the excise duties most injurious to transit, was, as he well said, to respond, after a hundred and seventy-three years, to the States-General of 1614, and to accomplish the work which the great Colbert had been unable to carry through to the end. He destroyed the good effect of these words, however, by new temerity of language. He appeared to wish to persuade the Notables that they and he were agreed. "His Majesty," he said, "has seen with satisfaction that your sentiments, in general, accord with his principles; . . . that the objections which have struck you . . . have chiefly related to forms."

Upon this assertion, a new storm broke forth. All the bureaux protested with virulence against this pretended agreement. They intimated that their opposition was aimed not only at the form, but also at the substance. *Monsieur* declared that "it was neither honest nor decent to make the Notables say what they had not said." The second part of Calonne's plan was torn to pieces like the first. The abolition of the internal customs was too bold; the modifications of the salt-tax were too timid. *Monsieur* desired that the *infernal machine of the salt-tax* should be wholly suppressed, and that a tax should be substituted in its stead. The elder of the King's brothers seemed to take the part of leader of the Opposition, which he appeared more capable of filling than the Duke of Orleans. La Fayette demanded, that, in the law which abrogated the salt-tax, the King should prescribe the liberation of all the unfortunates whom the salt-tax had imprisoned or sent to the galleys (for smuggling). Calonne was personally attacked on account of the scandalous exchanges or purchases of the crown property, in which he had sacrificed the interest of the State. The first president of the Chamber of Accounts, Nicolaï, the author of the denunciation, hesitating to sign it, La Fayette himself assumed the responsibility.

Calonne began to feel that the monarch who had made him the same promises as Turgot and Necker, and who was about to keep them in the same manner, was vacillating beneath his influence. He nevertheless still preserved externally his imperturbable assurance, and, March 29, read in a third general session the third part of his plan for the enfeoffment of the domains and the reformation of the administration of the waters and forests, as if the two preceding parts had been adopted. The next day he issued to the public the memorials comprising the first two parts,

preceded by an advertisement to the readers, basing this publication on the necessity "of dispelling the anxiety," he says, "with which some have sought to inspire the PEOPLE. The point in question is, not new taxation, but the suppression of unjust exemptions, and the employment of means tending to relieve the tax-payers in the most straitened circumstances. More will be paid, doubtless; but by whom? By those only who do not pay enough: they will pay what they ought, according to a just proportion, and none will be burdened. Privileges will be sacrificed! Yes, justice wills, and necessity exacts it. Would it be better to overburden the non-privileged, the PEOPLE?"

At the same time, he accused the Notables while affecting to defend them: "It would be wrong for observations dictated by zeal, the expressions of a noble frankness, to give birth to the idea of a malevolent opposition."¹

This paper, written by the celebrated advocate Gerbier, was widely circulated, and was sent to all the curés *that they might spread it in their parishes*. Nothing of such grave import had hitherto occurred as this despairing appeal of the organ of the crown to popular opinion against the privileged classes. A cry of anger and dismay resounded among the Notables. All the bureaux complained to the King of the *sedition* publication of the comptroller-general. The assembly, the court, and several of the ministers, united for the purpose of overthrowing Calonne. The Queen entered into the league under the influence of her confidential counsellor, the Abbé de Vermont, who was devoted to the Archbishop of Toulouse. Calonne had scarcely a single ally but the giddy Count d'Artois. Public opinion did not respond to his appeal. Although satisfied at seeing him rend asunder every veil, and break down every barrier, it supported even the retrogressive opposition against the wasteful minister, and applauded the Notables for the sole reason that they were a deliberative assembly contending with a minister of absolutism. The time for progress through *enlightened despotism* had passed.² Pamphlets rained upon Calonne, passionately repeating that formidable word, *the States-General*, uttered with solemnity in

¹ Bachaumont, t. XXXIV. pp. 343-373; Droz, t. I. p. 496.

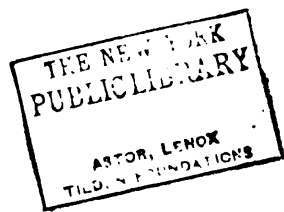
² A local circumstance contributed to render Paris more unfriendly to Calonne; namely, the erection of the *octroi* walls and the numerous barriers which imprison the capital. Paris, which had extended beyond its old boulevards, was spreading at liberty in the country like London to-day, and was greatly dissatisfied with the enclosure which was imposed on it.



GERBIER ,
d'après le buste de M.^r Houdon.

Maurin, del.^o

Lith. de Villain.



some of the bureaux. The paradoxical Linguet, who had lately celebrated pure despotism, and who was soon to preach bankruptcy, invoked the assembly of the Three Estates. "It is outraging the nation," wrote Carra, preludeing his career as a revolutionary journalist, "to propose to it, in the absence of the States-General, which belong to its constitution, to consent to reorganize this constitution by *provincial assemblies*, the true quality of which would be that of loan funds at the disposal of the comptroller-general."

A more important adversary, provoked by Calonne, brought a very efficient support to the coalition. This was Necker. Calonne had disputed the *Official Report*. Necker requested the King's permission to discuss its veracity with Calonne in the presence of the Notables. Louis XVI. replied to Necker, that he was satisfied with his services, and that he ordered him to keep silence. Necker was not the man to obey when his renown was in question: he prepared an apologetic memorial, and meanwhile talked and gave notes to the leading members of the assembly. During the interval, Calonne took a fancy to assert that Necker had not left in the treasury, as he pretended, a sum sufficient to complete the payments of 1781, and to begin those of the following year. On the ground of the *Official Report*, Calonne might easily enough have defended himself: here he was absolutely in the wrong. The successor of Necker, the ex-comptroller-general, Joli de Fleuri, interrogated on this point, declared in writing that Necker had told the truth. The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, who was deeply involved in the league against Calonne, caused Fleuri's letter to reach the King. Calonne, questioned with severity by Louis XVI., adroitly recriminated against the intrigues by which he was assailed, and imputed the opposition of the Notables to the cabals of Miromesnil. Louis turned his ill-humor against the keeper of the seals, and accepted Calonne's proposal to replace Miromesnil by M. de Lamoignon, a president of the parliament of Paris, and the cousin of Malesherbes. Calonne attempted to push his victory to its farthest limits, and likewise to procure the dismissal of Breteuil, the minister of the King's household. Louis did not refuse; but he insisted on informing the Queen, of whom Breteuil was a protégé. The Queen flew into a passion, exclaiming that it was not Breteuil who should be dismissed, but Calonne, who had compromised the King's authority by convening the Notables, and who now neither knew how to restrain nor to persuade them. She stormed,

prayed, and wept. The feeble monarch, who had gone to Marie-Antoinette's apartments to give notice of the removal of Breteuil, commissioned Breteuil to carry to Calonne his dismissal ; but, in dismissing Calonne, he kept the keeper of the seals whom Calonne had just made (April 8-9).

The plans of Calonne did not vanish with him as the plans of Turgot and Necker had vanished with their authors. It was no longer possible to return to the old routine. Louis XVI. had been made to understand, that, of Calonne's projects, nothing must be suppressed but the author. But who would execute these projects ? There were two candidates of importance, that of the Queen and that of public opinion, Brienne and Necker, who still retained his popularity, despite the vigorous attacks which a powerful champion had recently made on his system of loans.¹ The King could endure neither. The new minister of foreign affairs, Montmorin, made a feeble effort in favor of Necker ; he failed : and Necker having published his apologetic memorial, without permission, on the very day of the removal of Calonne, the cabal of the Queen took advantage of this disobedience to cause him to be banished twenty leagues from Paris. Marie-Antoinette had wholly forgotten her former friendliness to the Genevese. The Queen's party pushed temporarily into the comptroller-generalship an old counsellor of State of no importance, — M. de Fourqueux ; and, April 23, the King went in person to communicate to the Notables the fourth part of Calonne's plan, announcing a saving of fifteen millions, and the extension of the stamp-duty to many articles which had hitherto been exempt, for the purpose of contributing, with the territorial subsidy, to fill up the deficit. The King granted the Notables precedence for the privileged classes in the provincial assemblies, and the complete statement of the financial condition, so urgently demanded.

The Notables showed no more good will on this account, and appeared little disposed to accept the stamp-tax. The financial crisis was becoming aggravated from day to day : all business had ceased, and the treasury was on the eve of suspending payment. It was necessary to hasten to find some firm hand to which to intrust the helm. Montmorin, seconded this time by the keeper of the seals, De Lamoignon, made a second attempt in behalf of Necker. Louis XVI. was about to yield, when Breteuil came to

¹ *Dénonciation de l'agiotage au roi et aux Notables*, by the Count de Mirabeau ; 1st *Lettre sur l'administration de M. Necker*, by the same, March, 1787. There are good reasons in these, mingled with exaggeration and injustice.

his aid against the other two ministers, and insisted in favor of Brienne. Louis resigned himself to Brienne in order to escape Necker. The Archbishop of Toulouse was appointed chief of the council of finance, and it was understood that the comptroller-general would be merely his chief clerk (May 1). Brienne was another Calonne in morality, with less talent, and with pretensions besides to the character of a great economist. A wholly superficial personage, with nothing at the bottom but vices, and a petty, covetous, and vulgar ambition, he was one of those men, who, with a ready wit and much tact, cause themselves to be judged fit for important places, so long as they have not filled them. He succeeded in binding the Queen to his ministerial destiny as no minister had yet done. Marie-Antoinette governed ostensibly with him, being present thenceforth at all the *committees* held in the King's apartments, and accepting and invoking the formidable responsibility of a part for which she was so little fitted by Nature, and which would crush her with all her friends.

Malesherbes was restored to the council by his relative, Lamignon, as minister of State, without a department. He was no longer a guarantee or a power, but an additional victim; and, unhappily, the illustrious old man was to compromise in this ministry more than his life,—his glory, which belonged to France!

May 2, Brienne announced to the bureaux that the annual saving would amount to forty millions, instead of fifteen, but that a loan of eighty millions was indispensable. Under the impression of such a promise of reduction in the expenditures, the Notables consented to the loan, which was issued in the form of six millions of life-*rentes*. All the bureaux fell with eager curiosity upon those famous reports of the finances which had finally been given to them. They did not gain much enlightenment thereby. There was such an absence of order, method, and sincerity, in these reports,¹ that it was impossible to disentangle the permanent deficit from the extraordinary and incidental charges, or consequently to agree upon the amount of the real deficit. The greater part estimated it approximately at one hundred and forty millions. The reports for 1788 give us data on this subject which the Notables lacked in 1787, and enable us to perceive that the permanent deficit did not exceed ninety-seven or ninety-eight millions, in-

¹ They were not all given up; for "the King himself sorted those which he was willing to give to the Notables, and those which he was pleased to abstract from them, and which, apparently, contained gifts or malversations." — *Mém. de Besenval*, t. III. p. 226.

cluding twelve millions for unforeseen expenses. Calonne, with his thoughtless temerity, had exaggerated it, probably for the purpose of obtaining from the Notables as much money as possible.¹

Despite the economy announced, Brienne declared to the Notables that the territorial subsidy was necessary, to the amount of eighty millions a year, with the stamp-tax and a new form of the capitation-tax. Long and useless discussions were renewed in the bureaux. The Notables belonging to the privileged orders, that is to say, the immense majority of the assembly, were disturbed by the reproaches which came to them from the provinces. The nobility and the clergy were greatly dissatisfied with the Notables for admitting *equal apportionment* by law, while seeking to elude it in fact. Some remarkable incidents occurred in these discussions. La Fayette proposed that the King should be entreated to convoke a NATIONAL ASSEMBLY in five years; that is, for 1792. "What, sir!" said the Count d'Artois, the president of the bureau, "do you demand the States-General?" — "Yes, my lord; *and even better than that.*"²

La Fayette was not supported. He was more successful in two other motions: one for the civil status of Protestants, — a measure on which the government, as we have said, had already decided; the other for the reformation of the criminal code. It is just to remark, that it was a bishop, M. de La Luzerne, who supported and secured the passage of the motion concerning the Protestants; a fact the newer, and the more worthy of notice, inasmuch as the Bishop of Langres was a devotee, and not a philosopher. M. de La Luzerne went farther, and accepted in advance the liberty of worship, saying that he preferred churches in the towns to sermons in the wilderness.³ The ancient spirit of St. Martin and of evangelical Christianity reappeared at length to unite with philosophy against persecuting Catholicism.

The Notables, unwilling to take the responsibility, before the provinces, of voting, or even of proposing, taxes, finally declared that they referred it to the wisdom of the King to determine what mode of taxation would have the fewest objections, if it was really indispensable to demand new sacrifices from the nation; that is to say, they tendered their resignation to the King.

¹ See the observations of M. Droz, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. pp. 512-514. It must not be forgotten that the extraordinary and floating charges, when not liquidated, ended necessarily in a consolidation which added the interest of these consolidated funds to the permanent deficit.

² *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 177.

³ *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 178.

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Bellevue

The closing session took place May 25. Many sounding periods, and much mock praise, were heard concerning the *union of hearts, and the unity of principles*, and on the great results of the assembly. The confidence of Calonne had passed to his successor: there were the same assurances that they were about to emerge from peril; that every thing was ended . . . when every thing was beginning! A few years before, a great effect would have been produced by a sentence such as this:—

“The *corvée* is proscribed; the salt-tax is sentenced; the shackles which have obstructed internal and external commerce will be destroyed; and agriculture, encouraged by the free exportation of grain, will daily become more flourishing.”

But things are valued according to times and places: this was what the Bourbons knew not how to comprehend: it was ten years too late!

Brienne ended by protesting that it was the wish of the King to limit the duration of the new taxes, as well as to maintain the forms and prerogatives of the first two orders, which were essential to the monarchy, and which it was important not to confound with the equal apportionment of the tax.¹

It was not for the profit of royalty that the Notables had resigned their functions, as was speedily to be perceived. The monarchy might, nevertheless, have derived a momentary advantage thereby, and perhaps have gained some time, had Brienne possessed any political discernment. Every one expected a royal session, in which the King would compel the parliament to register as a whole the administrative and financial edicts consented to, in general and indirect terms, by the Notables. There would have been no violent outbreak of public opinion on this account. Brienne had the incredible indiscretion to send the edicts one by one. The first three, on the freedom of the grain-trade, the provincial assemblies, and the abolition of the *corvée*, passed without difficulty (June 17, 22, 27). The stamp act and the territorial subsidy remained. It was fully evident that it was necessary to begin with the one of these two edicts, the principle of which was popular, and which the parliament could only reject by rejecting, in the name of the privileged classes, the basis of equal apportionment; that is, by covering themselves with immense discredit. Brienne did exactly the reverse. He sent the

¹ See whatever concerns this assembly in the collection entitled *Assemblée des Notables*, 1787, two vols. quarto. The general sessions are also found in the *Introduction au Moniteur*.

stamp edict first! The parliament, overjoyed at this mistake, felt itself master of the situation. It demanded, after the example of the Notables, that the financial reports should be transmitted to it, in order that it might ascertain the necessities of the treasury before registering the edict (July 6). The ministry refused. In the midst of the stormy deliberation which followed this refusal, a clerical counsellor, Sabatier de Cabre, suddenly exclaimed, "We demand information of the state of the finances (*états*): it is the States-General (*États-Généraux*) that we need!" This pun was transformed into a formal proposition, and the Company decreed that remonstrances should be drawn up by commissioners, for the purpose of entreating the King to withdraw his declaration concerning the stamp-duty, and expressing the wish to see the NATION ASSEMBLED prior to any new taxation (July 16).¹

The Notables had abdicated in favor of the King: the parliament abdicated in favor of the NATION.

This was the overthrow of all its traditions, jealous as it had hitherto been of the States-General, and desirous of not witnessing their reappearance. On the morrow, it was terrified at the kind of delirium which had seized it. The framers of the remonstrances lessened the scope of the resolution of July 16 by saying that the States-General alone could consent to a *perpetual* tax. The door was thus opened for a compromise with the court. The King made no reply concerning the States, and sent to the parliament the edict establishing the territorial subsidy, and abolishing the two twentieths. Upon this, the parliament demanded the States-General without restriction. "The nation, represented by the States-General, alone has the right to grant the necessary subsidies to the King" (July 30).²

The majority, who thought only of intimidating the court, in order to obtain the withdrawal of the territorial subsidy, had been drawn on by two minorities temporarily united: the one, personified in the cold energy of Adrien Duport, one of the future powers of the Constituent Assembly, knew whither it was drifting, — to democratic liberty, to a revolution in which the parliament would disappear, and in which the States-General themselves would be absorbed in the unity of that national assembly lately invoked by La Fayette; the other, guided by the brilliant and giddy imagination of D'Éprémessnil, dreamed of a restoration of the privileged liberties of the Middle Ages, a régime of aristocratic

¹ *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXV. p. 334.

² *Ibid.*, t. XXXV. p. 378.

monarchy, in which the three orders would assemble at determined epochs, and, in the intervals of their assemblies, would confide the maintenance of the public rights to the parliament.

The King summoned the parliament to Versailles, and the two edicts were registered in a bed of justice, August 6. Two months before, the bed of justice would have prevented, or at least postponed, the struggle: now it was only an episode of this same struggle. The parliament had hurled a fire-brand which it was no longer in its power to extinguish. On the eve and with the expectation of the bed of justice, it had recorded a protest in advance, in which this scathing sentence is remarked:—

“The parliament, grieved at having been obliged to give its suffrage, within twelve years, on accumulated taxes, the plans presented for which would swell the amount to an increase of more than two hundred millions since the accession of the King to the crown, does not believe itself possessed of sufficient powers to become the guarantee of the execution of the edicts with respect to the people, . . . who see with affright the deplorable consequences of an administration, the excessive malversation of which does not appear to them even possible.”¹

On the day following the bed of justice, the parliament declared the transcription made on its registers illegal and void. The young counsellors stifled, by their numerical superiority, the scruples and apprehensions of the aged magistrates of the Great Chamber. An immense crowd, which filled the Palais and its environs to overflowing, welcomed with acclamations the magistrates who had signalized themselves by their opposition to the court, and their interference in the appeal to the States-General.

A regulation, issued meanwhile, touching the reduction of the expenses of the households of the King and Queen (August 9), in order to begin to fulfil Brienne's promises of economy, irritated the courtiers more than it satisfied the public.² “It is frightful,” exclaimed the followers of the court, “to live in a country where one is not sure of possessing to-morrow what he has to-day. This is seen nowhere but in Turkey.”³—“There is little merit,” re-

¹ *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXV. p. 389.

² The offices of the chamber and the wardrobe were reduced one-half. The stables and the kennels were united. The gendarmes, the light horsemen, and the door-guards were suppressed; which reduced the cavalry of the King's household to the body-guards.—See *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 416. The Military School was suppressed anew, October 9, 1787.

³ *Mém. de Besenval*, t. III. p. 256.

plied the public, "in abandoning what one can no longer keep, and yielding only to necessity."

The parliament, meanwhile, continued its attack. August 10, Duport denounced, in due form, the *malversations, abuses of authority*, etc., of the ex-comptroller-general, Calonne. The parliament received the denunciation, and charged the attorney-general to proceed with the investigation. The decree was quashed by the council; but Calonne did not trust to it, and fled to England. All the provincial parliaments reiterated the decree of the parliament of Paris. The indictment of Calonne was, in the eyes of the populace, that of the court and the Queen. Pamphlets sprang up on all sides. The attorneys' clerks, in the courts of the Palais, openly lampooned *Madame Deficit*. *Madame Deficit* paved the way for *Madame Veto*! The irritation against Marie-Antoinette reached such a point, that Louis XVI., by the advice of the lieutenant of police, expressly interdicted the Queen to show herself in Paris.¹

The parliament had postponed until August 13 the deliberation on the means of insuring the execution of its decree of the 7th. The Duke de Nivernais, a peer of France and a minister of State without a department,² endeavored to calm the magistrates by representing to them the necessity of showing France united, and the State provided with sufficient resources, at a moment when the affairs of Holland threatened to reopen the war. D'Éprémesnil warmly refuted him; and, by a majority of eighty votes against forty, the Company persisted in its resolutions; declared the edicts of August 6 incapable of depriving the nation of its rights, and of authorizing a collection of taxes *contrary to all principles*; and ordered the present resolution to be sent to all the bailiwicks and seneschalships within its jurisdiction. Cries of enthusiasm welcomed the news of this decision outside. D'Éprémesnil was borne aloft in triumph. The people were ignorant, that, in the preamble of the resolution, the parliament had declared that it was impossible, without violating the original constitution of the nation, to subject the nobility and the clergy to the territorial subsidy, and that these *principles* were those of the States-General. When it was known, little heed was paid to it. An infallible instinct taught the non-privileged masses that the States-General would profit them alone.³

¹ Bachaumont, t. XXXV. p. 402.

² This was the fabulist, better known as a friend of letters than as a politician.

³ Bachaumont, t. XXXV. p. 407; Droz, t. II. p. 12.

The court replied by exiling the parliament to Troyes (August 15). The King's two brothers were commissioned to cause the edicts to be registered, the one in the Chamber of Accounts, the other in the Court of Aids. *Monsieur*, who was regarded as executing, despite himself, an order which he disapproved, was applauded by the people: the Count d'Artois was hissed and hooted. The Chamber of Accounts and the Court of Aids demanded the recall of the parliament and the convocation of the States-General. The Palais and its suburbs were daily the headquarters of riotous crowds, which gave chase to the *spies of the police*, and manifested the most hostile spirit. The *clubs*, circles for reading and conversation borrowed from England since 1782, disregarded the prohibition to meddle with politics which they had received, and became the hot-beds of an opposition which sustained that of the streets. The ministry closed the clubs. August 27, the parliament, from its place of exile, issued a new resolution more violent than the preceding ones. Two days before, Brienne, under the pretext of the necessity of a concentration of power in the presence of so critical a situation, had caused himself to be appointed prime minister. The Marshals de Ségur and de Castries refused to recognize his supremacy, and tendered their resignations. It was the departure of the military glory of ancient France. Ignominy without came with anarchy within. The government, contending at home with the old corporations, bowed disgracefully before foreign powers.

In the last days of M. de Vergennes, French diplomacy had already lost much ground; nevertheless, it still continued to command respect. It was speedily ruined after him.

Vergennes, by the commercial treaty of 1786, had succeeded in arranging matters in such a manner, that it was not to the interest of England to make war upon us directly; but he had not succeeded in preventing her from doing so everywhere indirectly by diplomacy. At the very moment when Pitt was filling the English galleries with such fair words against international hatred, he was making it his chief care to undermine everywhere the interests and alliances of France. Irritated at the commercial compact of France with Russia, he avenged himself in Turkey. Seconded by the Prussian government, which had fallen completely under his influence since the death of Frederick the Great, he suddenly affected a great zeal for the maintenance of the Ottoman empire, hitherto so utterly abandoned by England to the discretion of the Russians; and urged the Turks to resume the offen-

and Prussia, to which subjugated Holland was forced to submit (January 15, 1788).

"France has just fallen! I doubt whether she rises again!" said the Emperor, Joseph II.¹ She would not, indeed, rise again under the banners of the monarchy. It was under other banners that she would drive before her the standards of the brother of Joseph II. and the nephew of Frederick the Great.

The ignominious *dénouement* of the affairs of Holland covered the government with general contempt, which was revived by the presence of all those unhappy Dutch patriots, who, compromised and abandoned, came to ask of France a refuge in default of aid.

The agitation caused by the exile of the parliament continued. All the inferior tribunals, and even the bodies foreign to the magistracy, the university for instance, had sent addresses and deputations to Troyes. The provincial parliaments had inveighed loudly, and demanded, one after another, the recall of the parliament of Paris, the convocation of the States-General, and the trial of Calonne. Their language became very menacing. "The continually repeated authoritative measures," said the parliament of Besançon, "the compulsory registrations, the banishments, the constraint and rigor employed in the place of justice, . . . wound a nation idolatrous of its kings, but proud and free; chill hearts; and *may break the bonds which bind the sovereign to the subjects, and the subjects to the sovereign.*" Several parliaments demanded, in the name of the *constitutional laws* of the kingdom, that, instead of organizing provincial assemblies, the ancient Provincial Estates should be reëstablished with much more extended rights, but also with their privileged and unequal form; that is, they claimed the régime of the Three Orders, in opposition to the new system of representation founded on the sole principle of landed property.² The parliament of Bordeaux went so far as to forbid the provincial assembly of Limousin to meet. It exceeded the parliament of Paris in boldness: exiled to Libourne, it refused to register the letters of transfer, as illegal.

Affairs, carried so far by the provincial courts, seemed tran-

¹ Flissan, t. VII. p. 456.

² The assemblies of the two higher degrees, the election and the province, were not to be representative until after 1791; the King until then appointing one-half of the members, who then chose the complement of their number. — See, as a specimen, the *Règlement sur la formation des assemblées de Champagne*, ap. *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 366, June 23, 1787.

quillized at this moment between Versailles and Troyes. The ministry was terrified; the majority of the parliament of Paris was tired of exile, and uneasy as to the consequences. Brienne made advances, which were not repelled by the majority, and which ended in a compromise without logic or dignity. The ministry withdrew the edicts of the stamp-duty and the territorial subsidy, lately proclaimed indispensable to the salvation of the State. The parliament, while declaring that it did not depart from its resolutions, registered the reëstablishment of the two twentieths, to wit, the first indefinitely, and the second until 1792; which twentieths were to be thenceforth collected, "without distinction or exception, from all the revenues which were subject thereto" (September 19, 1787).¹

The royal power and the parliament both emerged weakened from a contest in which both had been vanquished. Public opinion greeted the recall of the parliament as a victory. The young attorneys' clerks, and the turbulent multitude, who served as their auxiliaries, secured the illumination of the environs of the Palais by breaking the windows of those who refused to obey. Calonne was burned in effigy on the Place Dauphine; and other manikins, representing the minister Breteuil, and the Queen's friend, the Duchess de Polignac, were carried through the streets amidst hootings. Little more was needed for the image of Marie-Antoinette to have been treated in the same way. Sentiments of violence were felt vibrating in the crowd, which only awaited an opportunity to break out. The capitulation with the parliament was a wretched expedient, and not a solution. The storm was rumbling everywhere: all souls eager for action inhaled the electricity which filled the air. "From a tranquil chaos," wrote Mirabeau, "France has passed to a restless chaos: a creation may and ought to arise from it." And Mirabeau, who had not been called to the Notables, and who felt that his destiny was in a greater assembly, urged the parliamentarians not to accept the postponement of the States-General until 1792, but to exact them for 1789, — the *indispensable date*, he said; showing how mad, and fatal to the government itself, it would be to keep Franco in suspense for four years longer during such a crisis.² Affairs were progressing rapidly: this date of 1792, which Mirabeau so absolutely rejected for peremptory reasons, was that which La Fayette had

¹ *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 432.

² Letters of October 30 and November 18, 1787, ap. *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. pp. 459-467.

demanded some months before, without much hope of obtaining it!

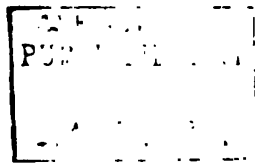
Mirabeau was not listened to. Brienne had resolved on his plan. Unable longer to have recourse to taxation, he had resolved to return to loans, but on the boldest scale. He had formed the project of presenting for registration in a body a series of loans to the amount of four hundred and twenty millions, realizable in five years,¹ with the promise to convoke the States-General before 1792. This delay would be employed in reëstablishing the finances; and the States, coming in a settled and tranquillized condition of affairs, could occupy themselves at leisure with ameliorations which would insure the future. This was at least what was to be said to the parliament. As to the King and Queen, Brienne calmed the apprehensions excited in them by the name of the States-General by representing to them, that, the loans once registered, the finances reëstablished, and the public mind blunted by so long an expectation, the States-General would be made a vain show, or even would not be convoked at all, since there would be nothing more to ask of them.

It was with this mixture of blindness and puerile falsehood that the last ministers of the monarchy prepared for the great battle of the Revolution.

Brienne, with the hope of alluring public opinion, added to the edict for the loan the so much solicited edict which restored a civil status to Protestants; meanwhile declaring, to appease the clergy, that the Catholic religion would always be the only public and authorized form of worship in the kingdom, and that the birth, marriage, and death of those who professed it could in no case be authenticated except according to the rites and usages of the said religion.² On the morning of November 19, the King repaired abruptly to the parliament, which had scarcely reopened after the vacation, and which was still very incomplete. Brienne, who had wrought upon the magistrates by all kinds of allurements, hoped to carry the majority, and to combine, by an equivocal form of session, the advantage of a voluntary registration and that of a bed of justice unresistingly obeyed. The keeper of the seals, Lamoignon, began by a speech injudicious if designed to win instead of to constrain votes, in which he recapitulated all the absolutist maxims of the beds of justice under Louis

¹ One hundred and twenty millions in 1788, ninety in 1789, eighty in 1790, seventy, in 1791, and sixty in 1792.

² *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 472.





Marie Antoinette.

XV. "To the monarch alone belongs the legislative power, without dependence and without partition," etc.; adding thereto, that the King could only find in the States-General a *more extended council*, and would always be the supreme arbiter of their remonstrances and *humble petitions*. The deliberation, however, was opened with freedom: each one gave and assigned the motive of his vote aloud. The leaders of the Opposition spoke at length and forcibly, but with decorum. The opinion which they sustained was that of Mirabeau, — to grant the first loan (that of one hundred and twenty millions) in consideration of the States-General for 1789. The discussion was prolonged six hours: the majority was gained over to the edict, with an entreaty to the King to hasten the States-General; when suddenly the keeper of the seals, instead of suffering the first president to count the votes, ascended the throne, whispered in the King's ear, then, on the order obtained from Louis, pronounced the registration of the edict according to the formula in use in beds of justice.

A prolonged murmur ran through the assembly, which saw a simple royal session for the purpose of free deliberation suddenly transformed into a bed of justice. The Duke of Orleans rose, and agitated, as though dimly discerning whither the step that he was taking was destined to lead him, said in a broken voice, "Sire, this registration appears to me illegal." Louis appeared not less agitated. "It is all the same to me," he replied. — "Yes, it is legal, because I will it!"¹ The despotic rudeness of the language ill concealed the hesitation of the heart. Louis ordered the second edict — that relating to the Protestants — to be read, and withdrew, leaving the parliament in session. The protest of the Duke of Orleans was more fully written out, and recorded in the official proceedings; and the assembly passed a resolution, stating that, in view of the illegality of what had just passed in royal session, the parliament declared that it took no part in the transcription upon its registers of the edict for the loans.

The insane arbitrary demonstration of the keeper of the seals had utterly ruined Brienne's plans. The court attempted rigor. The Duke of Orleans was exiled to Villers-Cotterets; and two parliamentary counsellors, who were reputed to have instigated this prince, were sent as prisoners to fortresses. The parliament responded by receiving a motion of Adrien Duport against *lettres de cachet*, as *null and void, illegal, and contrary to public and*

¹ Sallier (parliamentary counsellor), *Annales françaises*, pp. 128, 129.

natural law. The King summoned the parliament to Versailles, caused the decree to be stricken from its registers, and prescribed the registration of the edict in favor of the Protestants, despite the protests of the bishops present at Paris.¹ The parliament, though it would have gladly suspended every thing, yielded on this point, not to the demands of the court, but to the impatience of public opinion. The retrogressive Opposition, personified in D'Éprémesnil, signalized itself by fanatical declamations. "Would you crucify him a second time?" exclaimed D'Éprémesnil, raising his hand to an image of Christ. There were, nevertheless, but seventeen votes against the edict (January 19, 1788).

The parliament renewed its remonstrances against arbitrary punishment with more energy (March 11). Duport and the progressive Opposition gained the ascendancy, and made the Company use a language such as Turgot and Voltaire would have been greatly astonished to hear from such lips. "Arbitrary acts violate imprescriptible rights. Kings reign only by conquest or by law. The nation claims of his Majesty the greatest boon that a King can bestow on his subjects,—liberty. . . . Sire, it is not a prince of your blood, it is not two magistrates, that your parliament demands again in the name of the laws and of justice, but three Frenchmen, three men!" The gravest thing, in point of fact, in the remonstrances of the parliament, was the following sentence: "Such means, sire, are not in your heart; such examples are not the principles of your Majesty: *they come from another source!*" The magistracy making itself officially the echo of the popular clamor against the Queen was one of the most evident signs that the Revolution was beginning.

This Revolution, which was so far to exceed the greatest revolutions of the past, was preluded in the manner of the Fronde. As in the times of Mazarin, and Anne of Austria, the war was everywhere between the parliaments and the governors of the provinces, who executed the orders of the clerical minister, and of the Queen, his protectress. The governors caused the edict to be transcribed by force upon the registers of the courts. The parliaments protested, defended themselves by reiterated decrees, and

¹ The Protestants continued to be excluded from royal or seigniorial judicial offices, municipal offices involving judicial functions, and places conferring the right of public instruction. — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 474. Civil judges, in case of the refusal of curés or vicars, were to proceed to publish the banns, declare the parties united in lawful wedlock, inscribe the said declaration in a register kept by double entry, etc.

rendered borrowing impossible. Some had even refused the extension of the second twentieth granted by the parliament of Paris, and two among them had made remonstrances against the edict which restored a civil status to Protestants. They had not yet arrived at material warfare; but they were rapidly advancing towards it. The parliament of Paris, which, during four months, exclusively attached itself to making war upon the *lettres de cachet*, dealt a last blow to the loan by the remonstrances which it finally decreed, April 11, against the registration of November 19. The King replied, April 17, that there had been no need of summing up or counting the votes, because, when he was present at the deliberation, he *judged by himself*, and was not required to take account of the plurality. "If the plurality in my courts could prevail over my will, the monarchy would no longer be any thing but an *aristocracy* of magistrates."¹

April 29, upon the denunciation of a young counsellor, Goislard de Montsabert, the parliament took the offensive by ordering an investigation into the conduct of the comptrollers who should undertake to verify the returns of private individuals concerning the twentieths. The parliament claimed that the progressive increase of the revenue from the twentieths, the purpose of this verification, was illegal. After preventing the realization of the loan, it attacked the resources of taxation.

A pacific issue was no longer possible. Bankruptcy was imminent. Great projects were agitated between the prime minister and the keeper of the seals. Brienne, tormented, like Calonne of late, with a disease which the sacerdotal character rendered still more scandalous in him, and which threatened his life by settling on his chest, clung with despairing eagerness to power and its material advantages: he bartered his archbishopric of Toulouse for that of Sens, which was much more lucrative, and caused a felling of timber, worth nine hundred thousand francs, to be given him, in addition, to pay his debts. He increased the revenue from his benefices to six hundred and seventy-eight thousand francs. This excessive rapacity, in a man who enforced economy on others, excited general indignation, and consummated the discredit of the government. Public opinion received with contempt and anger the rumors of a *coup d'état*, of the Maupeou style, which daily assumed more consistency. It was related that a mysterious work was being carried on at Versailles, by orders of the ministry, in a secret printing-house, where the workmen were kept under

¹ *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 284.

strict surveillance. All the military commandants of the provinces were ordered to repair to their posts; and counsellors of State and masters of requests were sent to the seat of the parliaments, both with despatches, which were to be opened, May 8, everywhere at the same time.

Cabals of resistance were held, meanwhile, at the house of Adrien Duport, where the most influential men of the parliament¹ conferred with La Fayette, — Condorcet; the virtuous and liberal Duke de La Rochefoucauld, for whom so cruel an end was in store in our storms; the Duke d'Aiguillon, eager to efface the deplorable recollections of his father; and the Bishop of Autun, Talleyrand-Périgord, afterwards so famous under so many régimes. A journeyman printer found means, it is said, of transmitting to D'Éprémèsnil a proof-sheet of the edicts secretly put to press by the ministry. D'Éprémèsnil called for and obtained on the spot the assemblage of the chambers and the convocation of the peers, and entreated the first president to deliberate on what should be done in the existing state of public affairs (May 3).

The deliberation ended in a resolution of the highest importance, which was nothing less than a *Declaration of Rights* from the parliamentary standpoint.

"The court, . . . the peers in session therein, apprised . . . of the blows which threaten the nation by striking the magistracy, considering that the undertakings of the ministry against the magistracy . . . can have no other object than to cover . . . the former dissipation without having resource to the States-General, . . . and to annihilate the principles of the monarchy, declares that France is a monarchy, governed by the King, according to the laws; and that of these laws, several, which are fundamental, embrace and consecrate the right of the reigning house to the throne, from male to male, etc., — the right of the nation voluntarily to grant subsidies through the organ of the States-General; the local laws and regulations of the provinces; the irremovableness of the magistrates; the right of the courts to verify in each province the wishes of the King, and to prescribe the registration thereof only so far as they are in conformity with the constitutional laws of the province, as well as with the fundamental laws of the State; and the right of each citizen never to be indicted before others than his natural judges, who are those designated by the law, and never to be arrested by any order whatsoever,

¹ Among them, we remark two names destined to figure among politicians for long years, Sémonville and the Abbé Louis.

except to be brought without delay before competent judges. The said court protests against any attack which may be made on the principles expressed above; and *unanimously* declares, . . . that, in consequence, none of the members composing it *should take part in any company composed of the same personages, and invested with the same rights, which is not the court itself*; and in the event that force, by dispersing the court, should render it powerless to maintain by itself the principles contained in the present resolution, the said court declares, that, from this time, it intrusts them, as an inviolable deposit, to the hands of the King, his august family, the peers of the kingdom, the States-General, and each of the orders, united or separate, which form the nation.”¹

Whatever concerns the provinces in these maxims would have suited the fifteenth century better than the eighteenth, and the provincial parliaments than the parliament of Paris, formerly so unitary: it was neither the American *Declaration of Rights*, nor that which France was speedily to proclaim in the face of the world, through the organ of more legitimate representatives than the parliament; but it was a countermeasure admirably directed, and opened in time to discover the subterranean work of the ministry.

New remonstrances were framed, moreover, in answer to the King's response of April 17.

“The ministers,” said the parliamentarians to the King, “impute to us the mad project of establishing an aristocracy of magistrates. . . . What moment have they chosen for this imputation? That in which your parliament, enlightened by facts, and retracing its steps, proves that it is more attached to the rights of the nation than to its own examples. The French constitution appeared forgotten; the assembly of the States-General was treated as a chimera; Richelieu and his cruelties, Louis XIV. and his glory, the Regency and its disorders, the ministers of the late King and their insensibility, seemed forever to have effaced from minds and hearts the very name of the nation. All the stages through which peoples pass on the way to self-abandonment,—terror, enthusiasm, corruption, indifference,—the ministry had neglected nothing for the fall of the French nation. But the parliament remained. Men believed it struck with a lethargy which seemed universal: they were mistaken. Suddenly apprised

¹ *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 284.

of the state of the finances, . . . it became uneasy; it ceased to delude itself; it judged the future by the past; it saw for the nation but one resource,—the nation itself. It resolved on its course, and gave the universe the unheard-of example of an ancient body, . . . rooted with the State, itself restoring to its fellow-citizens a great power, which it had used for them during a century, but without their express consent. . . . It expressed a wish for the States-General. . . . Your Majesty . . . promises them: his word is sacred. . . . The States-General will therefore be assembled! . . . To whom does the King owe this great design? To whom does the nation owe this great blessing? . . . No, sire; *there shall be no aristocracy in France; but there shall be no despotism!*"¹

On the very next day (May 4), the resolutions of April 29 against the comptrollers of the twentieths, and of May 3 concerning the declaration of principles, were annulled by the council; and orders were given to arrest the movers of the two resolutions, Goislard and D'Éprémesnil. The two counsellors, forewarned, took refuge by night in the Palais itself. The parliament re-assembled early on the morning of May 5, rendered a decree, placing the threatened magistrates under the safeguard of the King and the law, despatched a deputation to Versailles, and decided not to separate until the return of the deputies. The night after, the French guards entered the Palais through an irritated and grumbling crowd, and surrounded the Great Chamber, where the magistrates, reënforced by half a score of peers, were in session. A captain of the guards, the Marquis d'Agoult, read an order from the King, commanding him to arrest MM. Duval d'Éprémesnil and Goislard, wherever he might find them, and demanded that they should be pointed out to him. "We are all Duvals and Goislards!" exclaimed the assembly with one voice: "if you take them, take us all!"

The officer retired to make his report. The deputies returned from Versailles without having been received. The officer reappeared at eleven in the morning, and reiterated his summons: no one responded. He ordered an exempt to enter for the purpose of recognizing D'Éprémesnil and Goislard. The policeman, infected with the sympathetic emotion of the spectacle, declared that he *did not see them*. Captain d'Agoult departed anew. The two counsellors and their colleagues judged that they had done

¹ *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 285.

enough to assert the principle. D'Agoult was recalled; and D'Éprémesnil designated himself, and followed the officer, after an eloquent protest. Goislard did the same; and the parliament separated, after more than thirty hours' session, decreeing remonstrances in behalf of the liberty of its two members "wrested by violence from the sanctuary of the laws."

On the morning of the next day but one, the parliament was summoned to Versailles for the bed of justice which was expected. The King spoke in harsh terms of the errors of every kind to which the parliaments had abandoned themselves for the past year, and announced an extended reform in the judicial domain, conceived in a spirit of unity opposed to the separatist and provincial maxims of the parliaments, and the assemblage of the States-General whenever it was required by the necessities of the State; after which, six edicts, or royal declarations, were read. The first edict, on the administration of justice, increased the powers of the presidial courts, and created forty-seven great bailiwicks between the presidial courts and the parliaments, which were to decide, in the last resort, all civil suits of a value not exceeding twenty-thousand francs, and all criminal cases except those concerning ecclesiastics, noblemen, or other privileged persons. The second edict suppressed the exceptional tribunals, bureaus of finance, elections and jurisdictions of the *traites* (customs), freedom of the waters and forests, storehouses of salt, and chambers of the domains and the treasury. The third edict, till the general revision of the criminal ordinance of 1670, — a revision touching which all the subjects of the King were authorized to send their observations to the keeper of the seals, — abolished the prisoner's stool and all the other humiliations inflicted on the accused; commanded the judges no longer to employ in the sentence of condemnation the vague formula *for the causes resulting from the trial*, but expressly to recapitulate the crimes and misdemeanors of which the accused had been convicted; increased to three votes, instead of two, the majority necessary for a sentence of death; prescribed an interval of a month between the sentence and the execution (in order that the right of pardon belonging to the King might no longer be rendered illusory), cases of sedition excepted; granted to those acquitted the placarding of the acquittal at the public expense; and abrogated the preliminary question (preliminary to execution), which had been maintained at the time of the abolition of the preparatory question in 1780. The fourth edict suppressed two of the chambers of inquiries of the parliament of

Paris, and reduced the other three chambers to sixty-seven members in all. The fifth, after a preamble which set forth with considerable ability the necessity of registering the laws common to the whole kingdom, in a court also common to the whole kingdom, deprived the different parliaments of the verification of the ordinances, edicts, declarations, or letters-patent, and invested therewith the *plenary court*, an institution which the edict claimed to be prior to the parliament, and founded on the ancient constitution of the State,¹ and which had been mentioned in 1774, in the edict reëstablishing the parliaments, as a threat in case of betrayal of duty on their part. The *plenary court* was composed of the chancellor or the keeper of the seals, the great chamber of the parliament of Paris, including the princes and the peers, the high officers of the King's household, and a number of other members, taken from among the ecclesiastical and military dignitaries in the council of State, the provincial parliaments, and the other sovereign courts. "In the event of extraordinary circumstances, which may oblige us to levy new taxes upon our subjects before consulting the States-General, the registration of the said edicts in our plenary court shall be only of temporary effect, to last until the assemblage of the said States, which we shall convoke, then, *on their deliberation, to be decreed by us definitively.*"

The long series of measures planned by Brienne and Lamoignon ended with a declaration announcing the vacation of all the parliaments until after the entire execution of the ordinance concerning the organization of the inferior tribunals. The parliaments were forbidden to assemble under penalty of disobedience.

This was reacting Maupeou on a larger scale. But the faltering monarchy forgot that seventeen years had passed in the interval; and what years! Like Maupeou, Brienne and Lamoignon attempted to cause the acceptance of despotism under the cover of progress. The greater part of the reforms proclaimed in the criminal laws and the administration of justice, especially the suppression of the exceptional tribunals, were excellent; but the nation was no longer disposed to be lulled by a few partial ameliorations, while its wish to conquer the free disposal of itself was evaded, and the phantom of a supreme court was evoked for the purpose of obtaining provisional taxes, with the hope, indeed, of

¹ The ancient name of *plenary court* had never designated a political or judicial assembly in the Middle Ages. The King held *plenary court* on great festivals; that is, he gave feasts and tournaments to his vassals and guests. The assemblies for public affairs were called *placets*, or *parliaments*.

rendering them definitive. The government aimed, in fact, at dispensing with the States-General, and denied their authority by law; the King reserving the right of *decreeing definitively on their deliberations*, which he would not, perhaps, even demand. He granted to them, therefore, only an advisory value. There was an abyss between the opinions of the crown and those of France.

The resistance had commenced in the bed of justice itself: the aged first president, D'Aligre, after the reading of the edicts, declared that the parliament neither could, should, nor would take any part in whatever might be done during the present session. He protested, in the presence of Louis XVI., against the overthrow of the constitution of the State, the recent violation of the seat of sovereign justice, and the despotism which it was now desired to put into the hands of the King, *and which the French nation would never adopt*. On quitting the session, the great chamber unanimously wrote to the King to decline the functions assigned to it by the edicts. The next day, on being convoked for the first session of the plenary court, it protested that it attended only passively. The son-in-law of the keeper of the seals signed the protest with the rest: his own son was in favor of the parliament! The King, like Louis XV. before the Maupeou parliament, declared before the plenary court that he should *always persist*. Nevertheless, he dared not convoke a second session, the majority of the peers having manifested the same intentions as the magistrates. The Chamber of Accounts and the Court of Aids had followed the movement. The Châtelet set the inferior courts the example of refusing the title and attributes of the great bailiwick, — an example which part of the presidial courts designated for this office esteemed it an honor to follow.

The movement of public opinion in Paris did not descend among the populace, as might have been supposed after the incidents of the last months; some of the friends of liberty were even troubled to see the masses of the people so torpid.¹ The popular

¹ La Fayette had written to Washington, October 9, 1787, that "France was coming by degrees, *without any great convulsion*, to an independent representation, and consequently to a diminution of the royal authority, but that this would proceed slowly." May 25, 1788, he wrote to him, "The affairs of France are verging on a crisis, the good results of which are the more uncertain, inasmuch as the people in general have no wish to go to extremities. *To die for liberty* is not the motto on this side of the Atlantic."

The Revolution had been foreseen long in advance. Now that it was close at hand, and impending over men's heads, they no longer saw it, or at least saw it only confusedly, and without calculating its true distance. La Fayette still relied only on

instinct in the capital felt that, at bottom, the cause of the parliament was not that of the people; and that the point in question, as yet, was only a civil war of the ancient régime against itself, the preface to the war of the people against the ancient régime. What was instinct in the masses was system in men important through intellect, — in many thinkers and literary men, Mirabeau at the head, who stood on the reserve, and waited, sure of not having long to wait.

While Paris preserved a deceitful calm, the provinces broke forth. All the provincial spirit that subsisted rose indignantly against the annihilation of the last relics of the old concordats which bound the provinces to the crown. The government, having offended the privileged classes without satisfying the people, had almost every one against it. The nobility of the sword, forgetting its ancient antipathy to the men of the robe, almost everywhere supported the parliaments in their violent protests. The privileged classes, more influential in the large provincial cities than at Paris, gave the impulse; the youth and the people of the towns were with whatever was turbulent; the body of the bourgeoisie, less ardent and more disposed to patience, had, nevertheless, neither esteem nor confidence for the government, and expected nothing except from the States-General. The government had not even known how to act an arbitrary part energetically: its only and very doubtful chance of preventing resistance in the provinces would have been openly to deal the parliaments an authoritative blow, and to exile the individuals while suspending the magisterial bodies. The magistrates, left concentrated in their towns, could everywhere concert together, assemble despite the prohibitions of the King, and issue scathing resolutions against the military commandants, and against those of the inferior tribunals who abandoned the *cause of the laws*, and accepted their new powers. The government replied too late by exiling certain

passive discontent or non-obedience, as being the greatest result that could be obtained by the friends of liberty. "I am sick," he wrote, "of seeing the people so torpid." Nevertheless, "the friends of liberty are daily growing stronger." They begin to *hope for a constitution*. — *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 227. "*A constitution!*" was also the cry of Mirabeau. "This comprises every thing! *There is none yet*," he said in opposition to those who invoked the pretended constitution of the kingdom: "it can only be born of the States-General." His mind, much stronger and more penetrating than that of La Fayette, moreover, fell into an illusion, which proceeded from its very strength, concerning the facility of terminating the crisis. He saw only a defile to cross. The ills about which so much noise was made, "for the most part, do not exist. There is not an embarrassment that could arrest the most mediocre talent." — *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. pp. 151, 154, 164.

parliaments, summoning others to Versailles, and issuing a decree of the council which suppressed the protests of the courts, forbade the rendering of similar resolutions under penalty of forfeiture, and placed the *faithful* tribunals under the protection of the King (June 20, 1788).

The impulse given was not arrested. The parliament of Rouen, which had lately proclaimed that the law was above the King, had at first opposed only a passive resistance: it assembled secretly, June 25; declared *traitors to the King, the nation, and the province, and perjured, and branded with infamy*, all officers or judges who proceeded in virtue of the ordinances of May 8; and resolved "immediately to denounce to the King, as traitors to him and to the State, the ministers who had been the authors of the attacks on the religion of his Majesty, and especially the Sieur de Lamignon, the keeper of the seals of France." The order of exile, despatched by the King in reply, gave rise to grave incidents. One of the presidents reproached the commander of the armed force for his passive obedience. "The authority of the King to do good to his subjects is unlimited; but all should set bounds to it when it turns to oppression."¹ The position of the military leaders became extremely difficult: they saw opposed to them not only *robins* (lawyers) and shop-keepers, but the order of the nobility to which they belonged, and which exercised a strong moral pressure upon them.

The agitation of Normandy did not go so far as insurrection; although Rouen was profoundly irritated by the arbitrary imprisonments, and vexations of all kinds, permitted by the commandant, the Marquis d'Harcourt, who conducted himself as if in a conquered country. Other provinces were less patient. The haughty Brittany was in a blaze. Even before the arrival of the commissioners of the King, the syndic of the States, the Count de Botherel, had protested, in the name of the three orders, before the parliament of Rennes, claiming *the execution of the marriage contract of Louis XII. and the Duchess Anne*. All the bodies sustained this proceeding. The commandant and the intendant of the province were hooted and threatened on their way to carry the orders of the King to the Palace of Justice. The moderation of the commandant alone arrested civil war. The parliament having assembled despite the King's prohibition, a detachment of soldiers marched to disperse it. A troop of armed gentlemen, followed by a crowd of people, hastened to protect the delibera-

¹ Floquet, *Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, t. VII. p. 234.

tion, which was finished in spite of the military authority. As at the time of the *battle of the Thirty*, the affair ended in a general duel between fifteen gentlemen and fifteen officers. The officers of another regiment, that of Bassigni, sided with the resistance, and protested in writing against the orders which they had received. The youth of Nantes armed, and came to the succor of the inhabitants of Rennes. The nobility, assembled at Rennes, Vannes, and Saint-Brieuc, declared infamous any one who should accept office either in the new tribunals or in a new arbitrary form of the States. Twelve gentlemen were despatched to Versailles, bearing a denunciation against the ministers. The ministry caused them to be thrown into the Bastille, disbanded Bassigni's regiment, and ordered sixteen thousand soldiers to march upon Brittany. The other two orders united with the Breton nobility in sending a second deputation, then a third much more numerous. The ministry was astonished, and dared not treat the new deputies like the first. Meanwhile, the intendant, Bertrand de Molleville, as violent as the commandant, the Count de Thiard, was moderate, had been hung in effigy by the populace, and had fled from Brittany.¹

The valleys of the Pyrenees had their storms like the shores of Brittany. The peasant landholders of the mountains,² joined with the nobility, descending in a body upon Pau, seized the artillery of the place, and forcibly reopened the Palace of Justice, closed by the King's command. The commandant himself of the province, bowing the royal authority, invited the parliament to reassemble, in order to reëstablish order. The King sent the Duke de Guiche, of a very influential family, to the Pyrenees with extraordinary powers. The inhabitants of Béarn, both nobles and plebeians, went to meet the Duke, carrying in their midst, as a palladium, the cradle of Henri IV., and claiming, by this *holy token*, the execution of the contract which the King had made with them as the seignior of Béarn.³

These incidents were of an exciting and dramatic character; but the agitation in Dauphiny had a political scope which was much more decisive. June 7, on the intelligence that the parlia-

¹ See *Précis historique des événements de Bretagne*; Rennes, 1788.

² "In our rural districts, every one is a landholder." — *Remonstrances of the Parliament of Pau*.

³ Béarn, like Navarre, was not dependent on the crown. — See the *Remonstrances of the Parliament of Pau*, which are very interesting, as summing up the political traditions of these two provinces. — *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 345, et seq.

ment of Grenoble (which, like the rest, had been suspended for a month) was exiled, the people of the city rushed to arms; called to their aid the mountain villages by the sound of the tocsin; erected barricades; drove back the two regiments of the garrison, which showed great repugnance to fighting; took possession of the residence of the governor, the Duke de Clermont-Tonnerre, and threatened to hang him from the chandelier of his drawing-room if he did not himself request the parliament to reassemble at the Palace of Justice. The parliament, somewhat dismayed at such a victory, endeavored to calm and disarm the insurrection; and, two days afterwards, its members, stealing away from their triumph, noiselessly and separately set out for the exile to which the King had consigned them, after, however, framing new remonstrances too well justified by events.

The guidance of the movement, abandoned by the parliament, was seized upon by others. A numerous assembly of citizens of the three orders met at the town-hall of Grenoble, and resolved that the States of Dauphiny, fallen into desuetude for many generations, should assemble spontaneously July 21. Hitherto, the resistance of special corporations and popular riots had been witnessed: on this day, the national sovereignty was seen for the first time in action.

This act opened the FRENCH REVOLUTION.

The Dauphinese movement, indeed, had had quite another aim than a return to the privileges of the Middle Ages. Very different from the insurrections instigated by the Breton and Béarn nobility, it was, or speedily became, more national than provincial. "The consent of the people convened in a national assembly is the basis of the social state," said the Grenoble declaration. This choice population, the violence of the first moment once appeased, showed an admirable good sense, behavior, and order, in agitation itself. The nobility swore to die for the rights of their province. The Third Estate aimed higher. A royal judge of Grenoble, Mounier, a friend of Necker, and a great partisan of the English institutions, who opened with lofty energy the career of the Revolution, but who would speedily pause therein, guided the Third Estate with a firm and skilful hand. The Archbishop of Vienne, Pompignan, the brother of the poet, urged on the clergy, and honored his old age by sentiments of political liberty unhoped for in this virulent adversary of philosophy.

The ministry, meanwhile, had placed twenty thousand soldiers

under the command of the Marshal de Vaux, for the purpose of repressing Dauphiny. The aged marshal wrote that it was too late! The court authorized him to compound. He required that his permission should be asked to hold the assembly of the States announced. This was consented to, on his promise to permit it. He forbade the assembly to meet at Grenoble. It was convoked at the château of Vizille, the former residence of the dauphins. There, invoking the memory of the hero of Dauphiny, Bayard, whose sepulchre is between Grenoble and Vizille, the assembly swore the union of the Dauphinese among themselves and with the other provinces, and the refusal of any new tax until the assembling of the States-General; and declared infamous and traitorous whomsoever should accept a place in the new tribunals: but at the same time proclaimed, as the Grenoble assembly had already done, that the Dauphinese were ready to sacrifice all their special privileges for the good of the State, and *claimed nothing but the rights of Frenchmen*;¹ that the tax substituted for the *corvée* should be paid by the three orders, and not by the *roturiers* alone; and that the Third Estate should have a representation in the Provincial Estates equal to the clergy and the nobility united in a single chamber. The two privileged orders, carried away by a generous impulse, had acceded to all the propositions of the Third Estate, of which Mounier, the secretary of the assembly, had been the real director. By his side had signalized himself a young advocate of Grenoble, now his ally, and subsequently his adversary in the great Constituent Assembly, — Barnave.

The assembly adjourned till September 1, after requesting of the King the withdrawal of the edicts, the abolition of *lettres de cachet*, the convocation of the States-General, and the sanction of the reëstablishment of the States of Dauphiny.²

The movements in the other provinces were not of so important a character; but the fermentation was universal. The disturbances were permanent in Provence, Languedoc, and Roussillon. The north and east protested with less vehemence, but not with less resolution. The army vacillated in the hands of the ministry. Justice was interrupted throughout almost all France. The anarchy was universal. The coffers were empty: it was impossible longer to exist by forestalments, the bankers refusing any

¹ This was far different from the declaration of the parliaments, that "the laws of a vast kingdom should not be uniform."

² *Introduction au Moniteur*, pp. 341, 547; Droz, t. II. p. 71; Soulaire, t. VI. p. 209; Floquet, *Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, t. VII. p. 157.

advances. The government was a wreck. The King took refuge in a sullen carelessness, and passed his life in hunting. The prime minister played Richelieu in his cabinet: "I have anticipated every thing, even civil war! The King shall be obeyed!" Loud words, which resounded in empty space! All was withdrawn: the minister who shared the Queen's favor with Brienne, Breteuil, tendered his resignation.

Brienne had attempted a last resource. He had convoked in June an extraordinary assembly of the clergy, hoping that the order to which he belonged would come to his assistance; that the clergy, so menaced by the spirit of the age, would understand all that it had to dread from a national assembly, and would decide to enable the crown to dispense with the States-General, either by a loan guaranteed by the ecclesiastical order, or by the abandonment of the monastic property to the State. The clergy comprehended nothing. Like the nobility, it energetically claimed the maintenance of the provincial local laws against an *unjust unity*; sided with the parliaments, its ancient adversaries; and also demanded the States-General with little delay. Each of the powers of the ancient régime repeated in turn, as if ruled by an invisible spirit, the word that was to hurl the edifice of the past from its foundations.

At the same time that it evoked the genius of the Revolution, and declared that "the French people are not taxable at pleasure," the clergy, retrograding far behind the Notables, formally protested against the application of taxation to ecclesiastical possessions, — against the *disorder of a false equality*; and demanded the renewal of the laws of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. concerning the integral guarantee of its immunities. With such views the last assembly of the order of the clergy of France separated.¹

The government, if this name could still be given to the anarchy of Versailles, gave way before the clergy: a decree of the council forbade the extension of the collection of the twentieths to the property of the Church (July 5). A wretched *gratuitous offering* of eighteen hundred thousand livres was all that could conditionally be obtained from the assembly.

The dying monarchy struggled in vain. An irresistible force impelled it to that convocation of the nation which inspired it with such profound terror. Brienne, no longer hoping to avoid

¹ *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 379, *et seq.* The Archbishop of Narbonne, M. de Dillon, the orator of the clergy, nevertheless approved, with some reservations, the restoration of a civil status to the Protestants.

the States-General, strove at least to dissolve the coalition of the three orders against the crown. July 5, a decree of the council declared, that, after several months of investigation concerning the ancient States-General, it had been impossible "to ascertain in a positive manner the forms of the elections, any more than the number and quality of the electors and the deputies," the conditions having varied according to time and place. In consequence, the Provincial Estates and the new assemblies of different degrees were requested to express their wishes on this question; and all the municipal officers, officers of jurisdictions, syndics of the Provincial Estates and provincial assemblies, districts and parishes, and, in fine, all persons having knowledge of documents relating to the States-General, as well as *all scholars and learned persons*, were asked to address to the keeper of the seals any information and papers upon the same subject.¹

The hand that had attempted to restore despotism, unchained, in fact, the liberty of the press! Brienne's calculation, that the Third Estate could not fail to enter into conflict with the privileged orders in the lists which were opened by royalty, was correct; but to dream of directing the attack of the Third Estate in favor of royalty was an absurd anachronism.

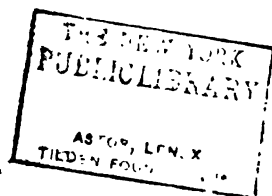
It was no longer possible to evade the prodigious movement of public opinion to which the government itself had just given a new impulse. The minister, then the King, resigned themselves to necessity. August 8, a decree of the council fixed the 1st of MAY, 1789, for the holding of the States-General, and suspended till this epoch *the re-establishment of the plenary court*.

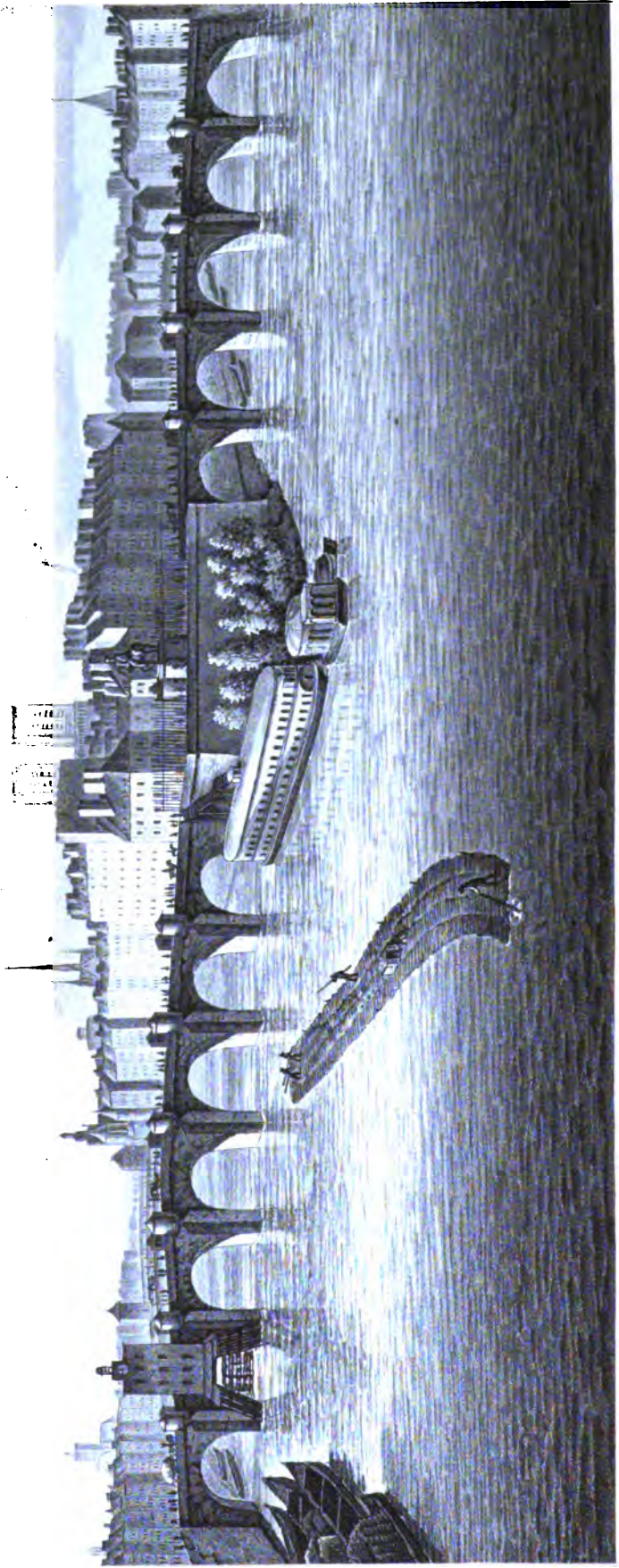
The fateful date, designated, the year before, by the finger of Mirabeau, was therefore fixed upon. The ancient régime, by the organ of its supreme power, itself set the time of its dissolution.²

Such an appeal, made in time, would have been welcomed with a unanimous transport of joy and gratitude. France was moved to her lowest depths; but she did not believe herself bound to gratitude towards those who appealed to her despite themselves, — the

¹ *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 601.

² Malesherbes and other politicians had proposed to the King to convoke, instead of the States-General, a national assembly based upon the provincial assemblies; that is, the *great municipality* of Turgot. — See Droz, t. II. p. 82. It was too late: royalty had no longer the strength thus to abolish the three orders, and to replace them by unity founded on the sole basis of landed property. The privileged orders would have resisted, and the people would not have sustained a revolution which would not have been democratic, and which would have only suited the extremists of the Third Estate.





VUE DU PONT NEUF ET DE LA CITÉ , prise de la Galerie d'Apollon.

blind and fragile instruments of an immense work. While the decree of convocation resounded far and wide, the minister through whom it had been rendered was swallowed up in ignominy. Brienne, at the end of expedients, had not been ashamed to seize upon the product of the subscription designed to establish four new hospitals in Paris, and the funds of a lottery opened for the relief of the victims of a hail-storm which had just devastated our most fertile districts sixty leagues around the capital! August 16, he caused it to be decreed by the council that the payments of the State should be suspended for six weeks; then that the *rentes* and salaries should be paid until December 31, 1789, part in specie, and part in notes. The redemption of debts was postponed for another year. Two days after, he caused the Bank of Discount to be authorized, until January 21, to cease the redemption of its notes in specie. This appeared an evident prelude to bankruptcy. "The public malediction burst upon him like a deluge."¹ The court abandoned him. Brienne attempted a last chance of safety: he offered the comptroller-generalship to Necker. The Genevese refused to associate himself with a ministry destroyed in public opinion. Brienne tendered his resignation (August 25); and Louis XVI., conquered, submitted to Necker as he had submitted to the convocation of the States-General. The keeper of the seals, Lamoignon, followed Brienne three weeks after.²

The second ministry of Necker closes the Ancient Régime, and opens the Revolution.

Necker returned to public affairs under mournful auspices. The gloomy silence of Paris had given place to frenzied outbreaks. The joy at the dismissal of Brienne, then of Lamoignon, was of a vehement character, ending in bloody scenes, in which the government by turns caused its weakness to be despised, and its tardy violence to be execrated. After three days of illuminations, fireworks, shouts, and songs, the watch, until then motionless, made an unexpected and brutal onslaught on the crowd, on the Pont-Neuf. The next day, the young attorneys' clerks returned in force, armed with clubs, and burned Brienne in effigy. A crowd with gloomy faces and tattered garments joined the young men.

¹ *Mém. de Marmontel*, t. IV. p. 29, year xiii. (1804); *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 360.

² The blind favor of the Queen followed Brienne in his retirement, and procured him the cardinal's hat. Lamoignon and Brienne both ended their days by suicide, — the first, May 18, 1789; the second, February 16, 1794.

The body-guard of the watch was attacked and destroyed, except at the Grève, where a murderous fire dispersed the assailants. The disturbances were still graver at the fall of Lamoignon. Large crowds repaired to the residences of Brienne and Lamoignon, and to the house of the captain of the watch, threatening to burn them. The French and Swiss guards marched against the rioters. The multitude was hemmed in at two points between two detachments of troops, charging in an opposite direction, and a true massacre ensued, for which a frenzied resentment was cherished by the masses.

Material order was nevertheless reëstablished for some time at Paris; and Necker made great and intelligent efforts to relieve the exceptional calamities which imbittered the people, and to revive credit and commercial circulation. As minister of finance, he justified anew the confidence with which he had inspired the nation. The purses closed to Brienne were opened to him, and stocks rose thirty per cent. He obtained advances from the capitalists and from certain corporations; generously pledged his own fortune as a guarantee of the engagements of the State; persuaded the creditors to have patience; revoked the decree of August 16, called by the public the *decree of bankruptcy*; and succeeded in providing for the extraordinary necessities of the dearth, then of the rigorous winter of 1788-1789.¹ In a word, he aided France to exist during the few months of supreme anxiety which separated the Ancient Régime from the Revolution. This was the chief and the last honor of the Genevese minister.

The fall of Brienne and Lamoignon necessarily involved that of their whole system. For the second time during the reign, the parliaments were reinstated in triumph. The royal declaration which recalled "the officers of the courts to the exercise of their functions" advanced the meeting of the States-General to the month of January, 1789 (September 23, 1788). The parliament of Paris began by prescribing, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, investigations concerning "the excesses, acts of violence, and murders, committed in the city of Paris since the 28th of August;" then other investigations concerning the crimes of State imputed to the two fallen ministers. But the applause suddenly subsided when the terms in which the parliament had registered the royal declaration were known. "The court will ever . . . pray that the States-General . . . may be regularly

¹ Seventy millions were expended in assistance and in the purchase of grain.

convoked and composed, and this according to the form observed in 1614." The *form* of 1614 implied voting by order, and awakened the recollections most opposed to the interests and dignity of the Third Estate.

An immense void was instantly made around the parliament. Its army of advocates, attorneys, notaries, barristers, and young clerks, abandoned it. Its factitious popularity vanished. The torrent of political pamphlets, which had continued to increase since the appeal of July 5, turned against it. It was the sign that the real struggle was beginning, — the struggle of the people against the Ancient Régime: the confused preface to the Revolution was ended.

A last delusion was, however, possible from the apparent characteristics of the first incidents of the struggle. While the provincial parliaments, like the Supreme Court of Paris, laid claim to the old aristocratic forms of the States-General, the official corporations of the Third Estate, the municipal bodies, the industrial communities, the corporations of legists, and the commissions *ad interim* of the new provincial assemblies, replied by addresses to the King, in which they energetically demanded that the representation of the Third Estate should equal in numbers that of the two privileged orders together; and invoked the memory of Louis the Fat, St. Louis, Philippe the Fair, Louis the Headstrong, and all the kings who were reputed to have been allies of the bourgeoisie against the feudal system. It was a last effort to link to the past the unknown and unprecedented future which was close at hand.

Neither the King, nor even Necker, understood this last appeal. Necker showed himself at once the most able of financiers and the most indifferent of statesmen. Entirely mistaking the respective force of the parties (a force, moreover, which neither Mirabeau nor any one as yet wholly appreciated), he thought only of reconciling the Third Estate and the privileged orders, and declined the responsibility of deciding the question prior to all others, — the double representation of the Third Estate; as if this very modest pretension, to which the Third Estate still limited itself, was not a thing granted in advance by the law concerning the provincial assemblies and by the initial action of the Three Estates of Dauphiny.¹ It was of little importance that the preceding States had varied; that the Third Estate, though it had

¹ An extraordinary assembly, which met spontaneously at Privas, assented, in the name of the Three Orders of Vivarais, to the acts of the States of Dauphiny.

What an effect would not such an act have produced during the struggle between the parliaments and the court! Now it produced none whatever. The privileged orders were indignant: the Third Estate derided a tardy and insincere espousal of their cause. The *rôle* of the parliaments was ended: the nation no longer needed mediums.

While the parliament of Paris bowed before the nascent Revolution, the princes of the blood made a feeble and vain effort against it. November 28, the Prince de Conti had declared in his bureau, to the Notables, that the monarchy was menaced, and had proposed to request of the King that "all the new systems should be forever proscribed, and that the constitution and its ancient forms should be maintained in their integrity." The King forbade the Notables to deliberate on a subject for which he had not convoked them, and requested the princes to communicate to him directly the views which they deemed it useful to express. The Count d'Artois, the three Condés,¹ and the Prince de Conti, addressed a memorial, therefore, to Louis XVI., in which they denounced "the revolution that was preparing in the principles of the government;" inveighed against the project of doubling the representation of the Third Estate; and hinted that the first two orders, if their rights were disregarded, would not recognize the authority of the States-General, and that the people would seize the occasion of their protests to evade the payment of the taxes consented to by the States. Princely feudalism ended by an appeal to anarchy: this was not belying its antecedents. The prelude to the emigration and the *army of Condé* already appeared.

The political press, the increasing *effervescence* of which the princes had bitterly attacked, replied to them without circumspection. Public opinion was indignant at the kind of capitulation which they disdainfully offered to the Third Estate. "Let the Third Estate," they wrote, "cease, therefore, to attack the rights of the first two orders, — rights which, not less ancient than the monarchy, should be as unalterable as the constitution; let it confine itself to soliciting the diminution of the taxes with which it *may* be overburdened: the first two orders *may* then, by the generosity of their sentiments, . . . renounce the prerogatives which have for their object a pecuniary interest."²

The Third Estate did not intend to implore favor, but to de-

¹ The Prince de Condé, the Duke de Bourbon, his son, and the Duke d'Enghien, his grandson.

² *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 499.

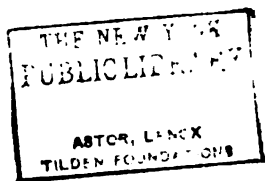
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Tableau du temps

*Louis-François-Joseph de Bourbon.
Duc de Orléans.*

Peinture par Boucher



mand justice. Pecuniary concessions could no longer conciliate it: its writers opposed menace to menace; and some advised to appoint no deputies unless the double representation of the Third Estate were obtained; others to elect a sufficient number, according to the ancient usage, without stopping at the number fixed by the letters of convocation. Many already thought the double representation of the Third Estate insufficient, and exclaimed that twenty-four million men ought to have more representatives than six hundred thousand!

A fortnight after dismissing his unlucky assembly of the Notables (December 12), Necker decided on his course, and induced the King to settle the great question of the double representation of the Third Estate in a manner opposed to the wish of this assembly. The royal decision was issued under the singular title, *Result of the Royal Council held at Versailles, December 27, 1788*. The King decreed, first, that the deputies, in the ensuing States-General, should number at least one thousand; secondly, that this number should be formed, as far as possible, in a combined ratio to the population and the taxes of each bailiwick; thirdly, that the number of the deputies of the Third Estate should be equal in number to that of the other two orders together.¹

The Queen, irritated at the coöperation which the nobility had lent to the parliaments against Brienne, did not oppose this decision. Necker, in the long report to the King which preceded the *Result of the Council*, seemed to have thought only of extenuating the importance of the measure which he had just dictated to Louis XVI. "The interest which is attached to this question" (the double representation of the Third Estate), he said, "is perhaps exaggerated on both sides; for, *since the ancient constitution, or the ancient usages, authorize the three orders to deliberate and vote separately in the States-General*, the number of the deputies in each of its orders does not appear a question deserving the degree of warmth which it excites. It would doubtless be desirable for the three orders to unite voluntarily *in the examination of all affairs in which they have an equal or similar interest*; but this determination itself depends on the distinct wish of the three orders."²

¹ "There is but one opinion on this question in the kingdom," wrote Necker in his report to the King. The Notables had expressed precisely the opposite opinion. It was scarcely worth while to consult them!

² Farther on, he says that "it will never enter the mind of the Third Estate to seek to lessen the seigniorial or honorary prerogatives which distinguish the first two orders. . . . There is not a Frenchman who does not know that these prerogatives are

Necker was right. If the double representation did not involve voting in common, it was an insignificant concession: but public opinion was fully resolved that the first victory should carry with it the second; and that there should be but one assembly, and not three independent assemblies. Some publicists were indignant at the language of Necker, and accused him of betraying the cause of the people. Public opinion did better than inveigh against the reservations of the minister: it paid no heed to them. Paris, in illuminating with a thousand bonfires on the evening of the day on which the royal decision was issued, showed how it interpreted the meaning of the minister.

The feverish irritation of the privileged orders responded to the threatening assurance of the Third Estate. The example of Dauphiny was not followed. The spectacle of patriotic union, which had been offered by this province in the contest with Brienne, was nevertheless repeated in a new session of the States of Dauphiny at the end of December. These States, on the report of Mounier, decided that the deputies who were to represent Dauphiny in the States-General should be specially commissioned to obtain permission for the three orders to deliberate together, and for the votes to be counted by poll. In this event alone, the deputies were authorized to concur in the establishment of a constitution which would insure the stability of the rights of the monarch and those of the French people. A number of the privileged classes had protested: the majority remained united with the Third Estate.

It was not the same elsewhere. While the Dauphinese nobility manifested this wisdom and disinterestedness, the Breton nobility attempted civil war. The States of Brittany had likewise assembled at the end of December. The Third Estate presented a list of grievances, the redress of which it demanded prior to all deliberation; and demanded the vote by poll, and not by order, and the abolition of privileges with respect to taxation. The nobility, on its side, resolved not to deliberate upon the particular complaints of the Third Estate until after having finished the general affairs of the province. The assembly exhausted itself in violent and sterile discussions. A decree of the council suspended it until February 3, and sent back the deputies of the Third Estate to ask new powers of their towns. The Third Estate obeyed. The higher clergy and the nobility decided not to separate, and circu-

property as worthy of respect as any other," etc. Turgot would not have compromised the principle of property in this manner! — See Introduction au Moniteur, pp. 500-509.



Pratt

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MOREAU.

lated through the rural districts a declaration in French and Low Breton, in which they accused the deputies from the towns of deceiving the nation, and making use of it for interests contrary to its own advantage. The law students, the youth of Rennes, replied by a virulent counter declaration. January 26, 1789, the domestics of the nobles, increased in number by some of the poor who had been roused to insurrection under the pretext of lowering the price of bread, attacked the bourgeois youth in the street with stones and clubs. No justice was to be expected from the parliament, wholly devoted to the nobility. The next morning, an attempt was made to recommence hostilities; but the young men were in readiness.¹ They marched straight to the cloister of the Cordeliers, where the nobility was assembled. At the sound of the shots which were exchanged, the alarm-bell rang. The people rose, but in support of the bourgeois. Had it not been for the pacific intervention of the Count de Thiard, Governor of Brittany, the nobility would have been overpowered. Immediately after, the youth of the neighboring towns hastened in armed bands to the assistance of the people of Rennes. Nine hundred came from Nantes, January 30. Angers, Poitiers, and Caen, held themselves in readiness to march. A document has been preserved which testifies to the delirious enthusiasm which had taken possession of the public mind, — *a resolution of the mothers, sisters, wives, and lovers of the young citizens of Angers*, declaring that, in case of the departure of the Angevine youth, *they will join the nation*, and perish rather than abandon their lovers, husbands, sons, and brothers.²

The nobles evacuated Rennes, and dispersed among their châteaux, covering their retreat by a new order from the King indefinitely proroguing the States of Brittany (February, 1789).

The privileged orders had no better success in Franche-Comté. The King had just consented to the reëstablishment of the Provincial Estates in this province, which had not witnessed their assemblage since the conquest of Louis XIV. The States of Franche-Comté immediately became the scene of an ardent strife between the Third Estate on one hand, and the nobility and the higher clergy on the other, who protested against the double representation of the Third Estate, and desired the election of the deputies to the States-General to be made by the Provincial Estates, formed aristocratically in the ancient manner, and not directly by

¹ Among the students of law figured a young man, afterwards General Moreau.

² *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 544.

the population. The parliament of Besançon rendered a decree to this effect, and protested against all change in the constitution of the province; denying this right to the States-General themselves (January 27, 1789). The people rose, and put the parliament to flight.

These first collisions produced a profound impression throughout France. Terror began to be blended with anger among the privileged orders. They began to discern that the great party, which began in this manner, might stop at nothing. The party of the Nation proceeded, moreover, unmasked. It was by loudly announcing its projects that it paved the way for success. Innumerable writers¹ served it as heralds. The diversity was infinite in details; but the great majority had at that time but one spirit and one aim. "We have no constitution; we must have one."² Even if we had one, we should have the right to change it: the dead cannot bind the living. No erudition! — travesty not the question of the rights of man by making it a warfare of charters and titles." The distinction between the three orders was warmly attacked. To the champions of the nobility, who perpetually called to mind the noble blood spilt for the country, the great reply was made, "*And was the blood of the people water?*" A pamphlet was entitled "*The GLORIA IN EXCELSIS of the People, followed by Prayers for the Use of all the Orders, containing the MAGNIFICAT of the People, the MISERERE of the Nobility, the DE PROFUNDIS of the Clergy, the NUNC DIMITTIS of the Parliament, and the PASSION, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF THE PEOPLE.*" The Advocate-General Servan wished the States-General to open with a declaration of the *Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, the necessary portico of the temple of the constitution. Mirabeau demanded the suppression of the parliaments, which were to be replaced by elective and temporary judges. He abandoned the opinion which he had expressed elsewhere concerning the conferring of the electoral right upon landed proprietors alone, which would be, he said, "a great step towards political inequality. No individual should exist in the nation who is not elector or elected: all should be repre-

¹ It is said that more than three thousand pamphlets appeared in the ten months between July, 1788, and May, 1789.

² The privileged orders were not even agreed in replying that they had a constitution. The princes of the blood had claimed it. D'Épréménail, in a pamphlet, January, 1789, inveighed against "the imbecility of those who maintain that France has no constitution." Meanwhile, Besenval acknowledged, in his *Memoirs*, that there was none; "that there were only facts and traditions." Subsequently, Calonne wrote against, and Monthion in favor of it.

sentatives or represented. The representation should be equal ; that is, each aggregation of citizens should choose as many representatives as another of the same importance.¹ Without the Third Estate, the first two orders certainly do not form the nation ; and alone, without these first two orders, it still presents an image of the nation. I will not say that the order of the nation should prevail over the two orders which are not the nation : *I bequeath this principle to posterity*. . . . I do not wish to be, at least in political assemblies, either more just or more wise than my age."

Mirabeau wrote these lines at the very moment when the Third Estate of Brittany was *prevailing* by main force *over the orders which were not the nation*. Events were about to show that the age, in a body, was progressing faster than the greatest among individuals.

It was not Mirabeau who had the terrible honor of concentrating the whirlwind, and launching the thunderbolt preceded by so many lightnings, but a new-comer, sprung, like him, from the privileged orders. "WHAT IS THE THIRD ESTATE?" asked the Abbé SIEYÈS.

"What is the Third Estate? Every thing.

"What has it been hitherto in the political order? Nothing?"

"What does it ask? To become something.

"The Third Estate is a complete nation. If the *privileged order*² were taken away, the nation would not be something less, but something more. It is impossible, among all the elementary parts of a nation, to discover where to place the caste of nobles. What is a nation? A body of associates, living under a common law, and represented by the same legislature. An order of nobles is a people apart in a great nation. The Third Estate is every thing.

"What has the Third Estate been? Nothing. If the aristocrats undertake to hold the people in oppression, I venture to ask, By what title? If it is replied, By the title of conquest, the Third Estate will go back to the year preceding the conquest: . . . it is strong enough to-day not to let itself again be conquered.

¹ He meant by importance the combination of the number of the inhabitants, the wealth of the country, and the services which the State derived from men and fortunes. — *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 600.

² It was Chamfort that well-nigh furnished Sieyès his famous title, — "What is the Third Estate? Every thing. What has it? Nothing." Sieyès modified it happily. — See the *Œuvres choisies* of Chamfort.

³ He says *order*, not *orders*, because the clergy, not being an hereditary caste, was not to him an order, but a profession.

Sons of the Gauls and Romans, why shall we not send back the pretended heirs of the Franks to the forests of Franconia? Our birth is as good as theirs. Yes, it will be said; but, by conquest, the nobility of birth has passed to the side of the conquerors. Well, we must bring it back to the other side: the Third Estate will again become noble by becoming the conqueror in its turn.

"What does the Third Estate ask? The merest trifle, in truth, — that its deputies may be at least equal in number to those of the privileged orders, *as long as privileged orders exist.*"

Sieyès next attacked the English school, which was willing to abandon one of the branches of the legislative power to three or four hundred families of the higher nobility, while throwing the petty nobility into the house of representatives of the Third Estate.

"What has been done?" he next asked, and forcibly criticised what had been done. "What is there to do?"

He appeared at first only to demand, like Mirabeau, that the Third Estate, which was every thing in right, should be something in fact. He ended here, however, by claiming that the Third Estate should be every thing in fact as in right.

"The nation is the law itself. The nation is not subject to a constitution: it cannot be so. The parts of what is believed to be the French constitution do not agree with each other: to whom, then, does it belong to decide? To the nation, independent of all positive form. Even though the nation had its regular States-General, it would not belong to this constituted body to decide upon a difference affecting the constitution.

"An *extraordinary* representation alone can alter the constitution, or give us one; and this CONSTITUENT representation should be formed without regard to the distinction of orders.

"The nation must be taken from forty thousand parishes. Who has the right to convoke the nation? When the safety of the country impels all the citizens, it should rather be asked, Who has not the right? What remains for the Third Estate to do? To organize the body of the government, and to subject it to forms which will guarantee its aptitude for the end for which it has been established. The Third Estate cannot form the States-General alone, it will be said. So much the better! — it will compose a NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. . . Its representatives will hold their powers from the twenty-five or twenty-six millions of individuals who compose the nation, with the exception of about

two hundred thousand priests or nobles.¹ They will deliberate for the whole nation, with the exception of about two hundred thousand souls. . . . It is impossible to say what place two privileged bodies should occupy in the social order: it is like asking what place should be assigned in the body of a sick man to the malignant humor which is undermining and tormenting him. It is necessary to *neutralize* it, and to reëstablish the working of the organs in such a manner as to prevent the formation of any more morbid combinations.”²

The programme of the Revolution was drawn. The *Nation* had only to execute the plan of campaign of its audacious tactician.

January 24, 1789, the letter convoking the States-General at Versailles on April 27 had appeared, accompanied with a regulation concerning the form of the elections. The number of deputies was increased to twelve hundred, — six hundred for the Third Estate, and three hundred for each of the first two orders. The King decreed that the bailiwicks and seneschalships which had sent deputies directly to the States-General of 1614 should preserve this privilege; that the small number of bailiwicks and seneschalships which had acquired claims analogous to the first since 1614 should be admitted to the same prerogative; with this exception, it was endeavored to proportion the number of deputies to the importance and population of each aggregate body. The bailiwicks and seneschalships which had not been directly represented in the States-General of 1614 were to send deputies conjointly with those of the first class, according to proximity and origin. The first-class bailiwicks and seneschalships were to convoke on March 16, at the latest, the bishops, abbés, curés, *endowed* communities,³ ecclesiastics provided with benefices, and nobles possessed of fiefs, for the general assembly of the bailiwick or seneschalship. The chapters were to appoint one deputy for ten canons; the priests attached to the chapters, and the priests without benefices, domiciliated in the towns, one deputy for twenty; the religious communities, one deputy for a community.⁴ The beneficiaries and the nobles possessing fiefs were to vote individually. The

¹ He should have said five or six hundred thousand, including the women and children.

² The pamphlet of Sieyès has become rare. The analysis of it may be seen in the *Introduction au Moniteur*, pp. 606-608; and the quotations given by Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. VI. pp. 299-303.

³ The mendicant monks were excluded.

⁴ The communities of women were entitled to be represented by an ecclesiastic.

priests without benefices, domiciliated in the rural districts, and the nobles without fiefs, were to be entitled to vote individually. In the towns named in the schedule annexed to the present regulation, the inhabitants were to assemble, at first, by corporation; the corporations of the arts and trades were to appoint one deputy for a hundred electors present; the corporations of the liberal arts, merchants, etc., were to appoint two per cent; the native inhabitants, or naturalized Frenchmen, aged twenty-five, domiciliated and included in the list of tax-payers, who formed a part of no corporation, were likewise to elect two deputies for one hundred. The deputies chosen by the different separate assemblies, forming the general assembly of the Third Estate of the town, were to meet at the town-hall to draw up the *cahier* (official instructions) of the complaints and grievances of the town, and to appoint the number of deputies of the second degree fixed in the said schedule to carry the *cahier* to the bailiwick or seneschalship. Paris alone was to send a deputation directly to the States-General: the other cities were to vote for the States only with the whole bailiwick or seneschalship of which they formed a part. In the parishes, burghs, and villages, and in the towns not included in the aforesaid schedule, all the inhabitants together were to coöperate in framing the *cahier* of their commune, and directly to appoint two deputies for two hundred hearths or under; and three, for from two to three hundred hearths, to carry their *cahier* to the bailiwick. The deputies of the Third Estate, elected in the towns and the rural districts, were to meet in each bailiwick or seneschalship for the purpose of reducing the *cahiers* to a single one, and of choosing from among their number, in the proportion of one to four, deputies to carry the *cahier* of the bailiwick to the general assembly of the first-class bailiwick, to contribute to reduce to a single one the *cahiers* of the different bailiwicks under the jurisdiction of the superior bailiwick, and to elect the deputies to the States-General. Each order was to draw up its *cahiers*, and appoint its deputies separately, *unless they preferred to proceed in common*.¹ The *cahiers* of each order were to be decided upon definitively in the assembly of the order. The deputies to the assemblies of different degrees were to be elected *vivâ voce*; the deputies to the States-General were

¹ Necker timidly suggested, by this clause, that union of the three orders in the electoral assemblies which he had not dared cause the King to decree for the National Assembly. The suggestion was not regarded.

alone to be elected by closed ballot. There were to be as many ballots as deputies.¹

Among the anomalies and inequalities which were preserved by this new form of election, and which Mirabeau strongly censured from the stand-point of universal and direct suffrage,² we discern the idea of a compromise between the confused traditions of past times³ and the rational requirements of the spirit of the age. The genius of common law had nevertheless succeeded in making immense progress by conquering the formal participation of every tax-payer in the preparatory operations. It belonged to the assemblies that proceeded from these operations to complete the work.

The electoral period opened. All France did not assemble at the same day, as has since been seen. The bailiwicks were convoked one after another. During nearly three months, the movement spread slowly over the surface of the country with an infinite variety of incidents and emotions. A whole volume, and a large one, might be written on the official proceedings of these thousands of assemblies, where the humblest citizen, in the most remote corner of France, could open his heart, and express his aspirations and wishes. In the recesses of our national archives reposes the soul of a whole generation; and what a generation! — that by which was effected the transition from one world to another, — from ancient to modern France!

The meetings of the Third Estate were signalized, in general, by the calmness and dignity of the deliberations: it went forward like a great army well disciplined, and confident of victory. At Paris, it began by an act of sovereignty, — the substitution for the presidents and secretaries imposed on it by the government, of presidents and secretaries voluntarily chosen. The assemblies of the towns were, however, more remarkable for the character than the number of the voters. The masses were better fitted for

¹ *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 557.

² *Réponse à Cerutti*, ap. *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. pp. 223–227.

³ At the time of the ancient States-General, the deputies had been appointed in Burgundy, Provence, Languedoc, and Brittany, by the Provincial Estates, so oligarchic in their composition, without the intervention of the people. At Paris, in 1614, the elections had been made by the municipal corporation, with a small number of notables, chosen in great part by the district officers. A portion only of the people had been represented by a few deputies from the trade corporations. — See our t. XII. p. 234. By a regulation of April 13, 1789, it was enacted that no one should be admitted into the assemblies of the Third Estate at Paris except on the payment of a capitation-tax of six livres. — *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 576. This restriction called forth vehement complaints.

revolutionary action than for the regular working of free institutions; the *proletaires* proper were found outside the assemblies, and a great part of the artisans summoned did not vote: the elections were made almost everywhere by the middle classes.¹ There was, on the contrary, nothing but disturbance and clamor in the meetings of the nobility. The provincial gentlemen re-criminated against the court nobility, and accused the great lords of having opened the door to the philosophers: it seemed a routed army firing upon its leaders. With less tumult, the assemblies of the clergy presented not less discord. The democracy of the *curés* held in check the aristocracy of the bishops; and the long-standing discontent of the lower clergy produced a general outbreak, of which many symptoms, especially a great number of political pamphlets, had given warning.

The nobility and the higher clergy attempted that secession in Brittany with which the princes of the blood had threatened France in their memorial to the King. They claimed for the Provincial Estates the right to appoint the deputies to the States-General; and, as this was unheeded, refused to proceed to the election (April 17–20). They ended only in depriving the party of the ancient régime of thirty votes in the States-General.

In Provence, the most violently dramatic scenes signaled the epoch of the elections. Here, as in Brittany and the two Burgundies, the privileged orders had protested against the doubling of the Third Estate, and had claimed the election of the deputies to the States-General for the Provincial Estates recently re-established in Provence, the same as in Dauphiny and Franche-Comté. Mirabeau, in the chamber of the nobility in the Provincial Estates, had supported the rights and interests of the Third Estate with extraordinary brilliancy, and revealed an orator such as the world had not heard since the tribune of antique eloquence had closed.²

¹ At Paris, few of the lower classes voted, except in the large faubourgs. M. Droz, nevertheless, makes the number of voters infinitely too small (twelve thousand): there were probably at least twenty-five thousand out of sixty thousand electors, as M. Buchez affirms. — *Hist. parlementaire de la Révolution*, t. I. p. 240, 2d edit. There were sixty *arrondissements* or electoral quarters; and we see that there were four hundred and seventy-six voters in the quarter of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont alone (*ibid.*, p. 276). It may be remarked, that the proportion of voters to the whole number of electors has generally increased during the different phases of the Revolution for the last sixty years. Bailli, in his *Memoirs* (t. I. p. 13), says, that, at Paris, the men who were afraid of displeasing the courtiers and the adversaries of the impending changes abstained from appearing at the assemblies.

² It is in a reply to the chambers of the clergy and the nobility, which had treated him as an *enemy of the public peace*, that is found the celebrated passage: "Among all

Excluded by his order, on some frivolous pretext, he became the idol of the Provençal people (January–February). When he reappeared in the month of March for the elections, the whole population went to meet him on the highways, scattering palms, laurels, and olive-branches in his path: the young men escorted him on horseback, and the towns received him with bonfires. Sedition, meanwhile, was fermenting in Marseilles: the political effervescence of the moment; the sufferings of a cruel winter, combined with the general dearth; and the imprudent provocations of the nobles, who had endeavored to stir up the rural districts against the towns, — all had united to irritate the populace, who had just forced the *échevins* to lower the price of meat and bread to a rate disproportioned to the real value. Marseilles was in the midst of anarchy. Mirabeau hastened thither; usurped, so to speak, the dictatorship of genius; improvised a civic militia; revived the courage of the municipal council; addressed himself to the good sense of the populace; and without fighting, without reaction, by the sole ascendancy of eloquence and reason, persuaded the people to permit the low rate of provisions, extorted by the mob, to be abolished (March 22–26). Meanwhile, blood was flowing at Aix. The Marquis de La Fare, the first consul of Aix and the leader of the party of the nobility, furious at seeing the Third Estate disposed to elect Mirabeau, incensed the people by his provocations, sought an occasion for a conflict, and ordered the soldiers to fire. Several of the people fell. The populace rushed on the soldiers, dispersed them, forced the first consul to fly to escape certain death, and seized the grain stored by the city. Mirabeau returned from Marseilles to Aix, harangued the people, caused the weapons to fall from their hands, reëstablished the free circulation of grain, and restored every thing to order as if by enchantment; then likewise appeased Toulon, which was in insurrection; delivered, by the force of per-

peoples, in all ages, the aristocrats have implacably persecuted the friends of the people; and if, by some strange freak of fortune, some one of these has risen up in their midst, they have attacked him above all, eager as they have been to inspire terror by the choice of their victim. Thus perished the last of the Gracchi by the hand of the patricians: but, struck by the mortal blow, he cast a handful of dust towards heaven, calling upon the avenging gods; and from this dust was born Marius, — Marius, less illustrious for having exterminated the Cimbri than for having thrown down in Rome the aristocracy of the nobility. . . . I am, I have been, and I shall be till death, the advocate of public liberty, the advocate of the constitution. Woe to the privileged orders when their members are men of the people rather than of the nobles! for privileges will end, but the people is eternal" (January 5, 1789). — See *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. pp. 233–260.

suasion, the Bishop of Sisteron, one of the leaders of the aristocrats, pursued and besieged in Manosque by the peasants; and set out again for Paris, as the deputy of the Third Estate of Aix and Marseilles, amidst the applause of Provence and of all France. These were the purest and the most glorious movements of his stormy and contested career.¹

In the majority of the provinces, the immense moral agitation of the elections did not transform itself into material conflicts or street riots. The solemnity of the act which was accomplished awed the public mind. Provence, however, was not alone disturbed: the elections at Paris, retarded by the fault of the ministry, were darkened by scenes which presaged social tempests beyond the revolution which was beginning, and announced those sinister conflicts between the middle and the lower classes which were destined to be the scourge of the new régime. Between the appointment of the electors by the primary meetings and that of the deputies by the electors, the house of Réveillon, a manufacturer of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, who had been accused of speeches hostile to the working-men, had been sacked therein.² A furious mob devastated and burned every thing. The authorities, who had suffered the sedition to increase for two days without doing any thing to check it, repressed it at length by a large body of troops, and with great bloodshed, after an infuriated combat, in which the rioters defended themselves with stones and clubs against the musketry (April 28). The parties accused each other reciprocally of having instigated the sedition in order to profit by it.³

It was under the impression of this lugubrious incident that the preparation of the *cahiers* of Paris was completed. The operations were ended almost everywhere in the provinces. It is impossible to give here a complete analysis of the *cahiers* of the bailiwicks and seneschalships, — that vast testament of ancient

¹ *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. pp. 274-309; Buchez, *Hist. parlement*, t. I. pp. 229-231. Together with Mirabeau, a Protestant was elected by the Third Estate of Marseilles. The minister Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, the son of a celebrated pastor of the wilderness, was chosen at Nîmes.

² It was pretended that he had said that the working-men earned too much; that they could live on fifteen sous a day. This, according to all appearances, was a pure calumny.

³ The language of certain counter-revolutionary publications was of a nature to strengthen the suspicions. "Who can say," wrote the journal *L'Ami du Roi*, "whether the despotism of the bourgeoisie will not succeed the pretended aristocracy of the nobles?" Réveillon accused an abbé, his personal enemy, and attached to the household of the Count d'Artois, of having instigated the movement.

France. We can only sum up the most salient features. A powerful interest is attached to this last manifestation of the three orders into which French society had been divided for so many centuries.

The *cahiers* of the clergy demanded that the Roman-Catholic religion should remain the sole public worship. Part of the *cahiers* accepted *civil tolerance*: the rest demanded the revocation or reconsideration of the edict of November, 1787, on Protestant marriages, and the interdiction of offices and posts to non-Catholics, with the most rigorous observance of Sundays and feast-days. Many of the *cahiers* demanded the maintenance of the censorship of books; almost all, the reëstablishment of the national and provincial councils, in order to revive ecclesiastical discipline; the abolition of the plurality of benefices; and the execution of the laws prescribing residence in their dioceses to prelates. A considerable number of the *cahiers* demanded the abolition of the concordat, the reëstablishment of free ecclesiastical elections, and the reintegration of the curés into all their primitive rights; and that the authority (of the bishops) should be confined within the bounds set by the holy canons. The clergy demanded the maintenance of all their honorary rights, as the first order of the State: *they renounced all pecuniary exemption*,¹ but claimed the right of apportioning their share of the taxes themselves. They demanded the increase of the revenues of the curés and vicars, and the abolition of perquisites; the preservation of the monastic orders, with the provision that they should be generally employed in the education of youth, the service of the hospitals, etc.; and the abridgment to eighteen of the age for the monastic vows. One *cahier*, however, anticipating the contingency of the suppression of the convents, demanded that provision should at least be made for the future support of the monks.

Complaints were made of the openness of public prostitution and libertinism; of the lascivious paintings, sculptures, and engravings, *which corrupt the heart through the eyes*; of gaming-houses, and of the immorality of plays. It was demanded that a plan of national education should be made; that education should be confided everywhere to ecclesiastical, secular, or regular communities; and that school-masters and school-mistresses should be settled in all the parishes, subject to the inspection of

¹ The last assembly of the clergy, in June, 1788, had demanded the maintenance of the pecuniary privileges: but these assemblies represented the higher clergy alone; the lower clergy had the preponderance, in turn, in the States.

the curés, and even removable by them. The clergy depicted public education as being in a deplorable state since the destruction of the Jesuits. The *cahier* of Laon demanded the formation of an educational corps, under the authority of the bishops. It was demanded that no professor should be admitted into the universities or the schools who had not given proof of his attachment to the Catholic religion; and that not only the public colleges, but the private educational institutions, should be subject to ecclesiastical authority.

Some of the *cahiers* desired that the King should be entreated to establish a new electoral division of the kingdom, arranged in proportion to the extent and population, without distinction of provinces, *pays d'États*, and generalities. Some demanded that the States-General should be permanent; others, periodical. The inviolability of the deputies was demanded. The *cahiers* were divided on the important question of the vote by order or by poll: several, by a sort of compromise, accepted the vote by poll on the taxes alone. In general, they laid down the distinction between the three orders as the basis of the constitution of the State with the hereditary monarchy. The *cahier* of the viscountship of Paris placed among the fundamental laws the exclusive use of the Catholic religion as the public form of worship, and the inviolability of the property of *corporations* as of private individuals. The eligibility of all citizens to ecclesiastical, civil, or military employments, according to their merit and services, and not according to their birth, was demanded. No law should be established except by the authority of the King and the free consent of the States-General. Taxation should only be consented to temporarily, and the consent should be renewed at each session of the States-General. The *cahier* of Lyons demanded the abolition of all privileges or exemptions of provinces, towns, or corporations. Individual liberty, the abolition or reduction of *lettres de cachet* to regular forms with guarantees, and the abolition of the slave-trade and of slavery, or at least the mitigation of the lot of the negroes, were demanded. The *cahiers* of Melun and Moret demanded the destruction of all the relics of serfdom in Franche-Comté and throughout France. The responsibility of the ministers; the perpetual interdiction of the violation of the secrecy of letters; Provincial Estates everywhere; a sovereign court, or court of appeal, in every province; justices' courts, or councils of arbitrament; the irremovableness of the magistrates; the abolition of the vendibility of office; the abolition of excep-

tional tribunals, and the abolition or reformation of seigniorial courts; reforms in civil and criminal law; the cessation of distinction of rank and birth in the application of punishment;¹ and the abolition of tortures revolting to humanity, — were demanded. (In general, the clergy demanded the same reforms in criminal law which were preached by the philosophers, except that they desired the maintenance of the punishment of death for sacrilege, or the crime of high treason against divinity.)

The *cahiers* demanded the establishment of the same form of elective administration for all the municipalities in the towns, burghs, and villages; the suppression of the lotteries and the *monts-de-piété*; hospitals in the rural districts; the subjection of all charitable institutions to public administrations or charitable boards; and the simplification of the apportionment and collection of the taxes. The clergy requested that their debt, contracted, they said, for the service of the State, should be assumed by the State.² The abolition of the militia and the *corvée*, the suppression of the *captaincies* (established for the preservation of the royal hunting-grounds, and the source of infinite vexations), and the suppression, by means of redemption, of the *banalities* (obligation to use the mill, wine-press, etc., of the seignior), *franc-fiefs* (dues on the transfer of a fief from a noble to an ignoble tenant), seigniorial *corvées*, *cens* (quit-rents), *champarts* (field-rents), and other feudal rights, were demanded. Many *cahiers* demanded the suppression of all industrial and commercial privileges, trade-wardenships and masterships, etc. Some demanded the interdiction of loans of money at interest.³

The essential characteristic of the *cahiers* of the clergy was the preponderance of the curés. The lower clergy, held in strict subjection by the bishops since the time of Louis XIV., had risen energetically in the assemblages of the bailiwicks, and imposed their spirit upon the *cahiers*. They had two faces, so to speak, — one turned towards democracy and progress, the other towards the Mid-

¹ Nobles were decapitated and plebeians hung for the same crimes; the first of these two punishments not being regarded as infamous.

² A very ill-founded pretension. The clergy had preferred borrowing to taking the *gratuitous offerings* from their revenues. Had their pretensions been admitted, their past gratuities, in point of fact, would have been nothing but advances to the State. Their demand was specious only with respect to the loans in which they had simply lent their guarantee to the King.

³ The *cahier* of Colmar and Schlestadt, in order to arrest the *swarming* of the Jews who were devouring Alsace, petitioned that the eldest son of each Jewish family should alone be permitted to marry!

dle Ages. For instance, they desired a democratic reformation, to a certain point, in the Church and the State; election everywhere, save in royalty; the abolition of pecuniary and feudal privileges;¹ a great increase of public charity; the reformation of the courts; and respect for individual liberty. In all these points, they agreed with the spirit of the age. On the reform of morals, they still agreed at least with the school of Rousseau. On the important question of suffrage by poll or by order, that is, on the unity or the triplicity of the national assembly, they were hesitating and divided. On the proscription of the liberty of worship, the universal attribution of public instruction to the clergy, the restrictions on the press, and the preservation of their honorary privileges, they looked towards the past.

It might already be foreseen that the clergy, no longer the aristocratic clergy of the ancient triennial assemblies, but the democratic clergy of the States-General, would favor the first phase of the Revolution, and oppose the second.

The *cahiers* of the nobility offered more diversity than those of the clergy. A few demanded that the order of the clergy should be suppressed, and its members apportioned among the other two orders. Others, on the contrary, desired that a fourth order should be created by separating the peasants from the people of the towns. Some of the *cahiers* accepted the vote by poll, at least on the taxes: the great majority was absolutely opposed to it. The deputies should be inviolable. France had a constitution, whatever factious innovators might say. The question was, not to change it, but to root out its abuses. Royalty was the greatest of all privileges: the other privileges destroyed, that of royalty could not long endure. The States-General had not the right to abolish fundamental laws *without the express consent of the nation*.² According to the Constitution of the French Empire, which had fallen into desuetude by the abuse of arbitrary power, and which it was necessary to recall to its true principles,

¹ They had a singular manner of interpreting their immunities with respect to taxation: the clergy, according to the *cahiers*, had alone preserved the right of voting freely on the taxes, — a right which the other two orders had suffered to expire by limitation. This interpretation attested the immense progress of public opinion. The clergy in the past had desired, not to *vote freely* on the taxes, but not to pay any taxes at all.

² *Cahier* of Bugey, ap. *Résumé général des cahiers*, t. II. p. 29. "The States cannot, by their authority alone, substitute aristocracy or democracy for monarchy. They would be tyrants should they ever dare lay hands on individual liberty and property." — *Ibid.* The nobility thus recognized the full sovereignty of the nation as to political forms, but not as to the rights pertaining to human individuality. The question was only rightly to define *property*.

two causes must always concur in the formation and the abrogation of the law, — the consent of the nation, and the decree of the prince. *Lex consensu populi fit et constitutione regis* (*cahiers* of Évreux and Alençon). Some of the *cahiers*, in the minority, tended, on the contrary, to pure monarchy, attributing to the King the legislative power, without other reservation than with respect to taxation.

Some of the *cahiers* demanded a declaration of the rights belonging to all men. Concerning individual liberty, *lettres de cachet*, the violation of the secrecy of letters, the periodicity of the States-General, the inviolability of the King, and the responsibility of the ministers, the nobility agreed with the clergy. It was demanded that the constitutional laws should be drawn up in a kind of catechism, to be taught in the parishes. Some of the *cahiers* protested against the establishment of a chamber hereditary or for life (this was the cry of the petty nobility against the great lords in Mantes and Meulan). Several of the *cahiers* demanded the abolition of State-prisons; that of Paris solicited the demolition of the Bastille; Mantes, Meulan, and Berry demanded the abolition of the relics of serfdom of the glebe, and preparatory measures for the destruction of negro slavery. Most of the *cahiers* demanded the entire liberty of the press, with the responsibility of the printer and the author; a few reserved the ecclesiastical censorship of books treating of dogmas, or the right of justices of the peace to prevent the distribution of dangerous works.

The nobility consented to the abandonment of their pecuniary privileges, and to the equality of taxation, but claimed as sacred and inviolable property the rights, both useful and honorary, which they held from their ancestors, feudal rights, distinctions, and honors, seigniorial courts, etc., and enjoined on their deputies to refuse all modification or redemption by legislative means.¹ They likewise entitled property the customs, contracts, and capitulations of the provinces. They demanded Provincial Estates, but on a different plan from that of the clergy, and while seeking to reduce the influence of the curés as too democratic. The *cahiers* demanded that the provinces should administer their own affairs. Many of the *cahiers*, like those of the clergy, demanded that there should be as many sovereign courts as provinces: some desired the judicial offices to be put up for competition by the King, or bestowed on persons nominated by the people. The suppression of

¹ Some of the *cahiers*, however, consented to the redemption of tolls and banalities.

the intendancies and the exceptional tribunals, and the establishment of justices of peace and elective municipalities everywhere, were demanded. The *cahier* of Dourdan demanded that the municipalities should be, not parochial, but cantonal. Concerning judicial reforms, the nobility well-nigh agreed with the clergy; but many of the *cahiers* demanded, besides, the reestablishment of the trial of the accused by his peers or by jury. A few of the *cahiers*, like those of the clergy, desired the abolition of distinctions in punishment. Concerning the lotteries, hospitals, etc., they agreed with the clergy.

The *cahiers* of the nobility also demanded a plan of national education. Many consented for the instruction to be left to the clergy. The *cahier* of Bayonne desired the establishment of schools of administration and the rights of nations for the purpose of training administrators and members of the diplomatic corps. The *cahiers* demanded that the debts of the clergy and the different corporations should be left to their charge, and that there should be no more loans based on *life-rentes*. Some of the *cahiers* protested in advance against all paper-money: others accepted it as a contingency. The establishment of a tax on the income from personal property and manufactures was demanded. The nobility demanded measures in favor of long leases. Some of the *cahiers* desired obstacles to be placed in the way of the formation of large farms, as prejudicial to agriculture and population. The majority desired the maintenance of the militia, but with reforms. The reservation to seigniors of the exclusive right of the chase in their fiefs was demanded.

The majority demanded the freedom of commerce and manufactures; the definitive permission of loans at interest; the reduction of the number of feast-days; the cessation of the payment to Rome of annats and dispensations; and the abolition of the concordat, the reestablishment of the elections, and other ecclesiastical reforms, like the *cahiers* of the clergy. Many of the *cahiers* demanded the redemption of the tithes, which were to be used for the support of worship, the maintenance of religious edifices, and the relief of the poor; others desired their extinction in favor of the owners of the lands. Part of the *cahiers* demanded that the monks should be made useful; others, that they should be suppressed. It was demanded that non-Catholics should be reinstated into all the rights of citizens. The *cahiers* demanded for the nobility an exclusive and honorary mark of distinction, and the exclusive right of wearing the sword; also that the nobility

should be empowered to carry on commerce, or farm estates, without derogation from their rank. Several of the *cahiers* demanded measures to prevent the army from becoming the instrument of the executive or ministerial power against the laws; others desired the reëstablishment of the corps suppressed in the King's household. It was demanded that no officer should be removed without a legal trial. The greater part of the *cahiers* approved the measures which interdicted military rank to those not of noble birth, and protested against the preference accorded to the court nobility over the provincial nobles in the higher grades.

The resemblances and the differences between the *cahiers* of the nobility and those of the clergy are alike remarkable. Of the two privileged orders, each willingly sacrificed the privileges of the other: the clergy condemned feudal rights and the privileges of birth; the nobility attacked the tithe and the convents. It is easy to draw the conclusions. Like the clergy, the nobility had reached the point of consenting to equality of taxation. Those pecuniary exemptions, the sacrifice of which the reformatory ministers themselves had dared solicit but by halves, and the principle of which the privileged orders had the day before reproached the Notables for not having sufficiently defended, — these same privileged orders, assembled from one end of France to the other, and consulted in a body, abandoned in principle and in fact. It was one of the most glorious victories ever won upon earth by the sentiment of justice.

Unhappily, it was too late for the people to whom this sacrifice was offered to see in it only the sentiment of justice. That was conceded to them which they felt themselves in a position to exact; and they saw in this concession, above all, a homage to their power. There remained but too many causes of dissension. The nobility defended the rest of their prerogatives with so much the more obstinacy. They refused the union of the three orders in one national assembly, as well as the redemption of the greater part of the feudal rights: they had the sentiment of individual liberty, and this is their best title to respect; but they desired liberty for others only where their interests or pride were not injured thereby; they also desired equality, but equality within their own order, and inequality outside of it. They justified but too well the saying of Sieyès: they were a petty nation within the great one; and this petty nation wished to exist apart, and to lead its own distinct life.

This was what the Third Estate, the great nation, could no longer endure. Equality! — such was its demand by the thousand

voices of the *cahiers*, in the language of the *Social Contract*. All men had been equal before their civil association : they should still be equal in the sight of the constitutional laws of political bodies. The body or the individual who refused to participate in the public burdens, or who was only willing to support them in a less proportion and a different form from that pursued with respect to other citizens, broke the civil association so far as he was concerned (*cahier* of Nivernais). We order our representatives, said the *cahier* of Paris, steadfastly to refuse every thing that might offend the dignity of free citizens who come to exercise the sovereign rights of the nation. It was expressly enjoined on them to consent to no subsidy until the declaration of the rights of the nation had become law. All power, said they, emanates from the nation. The general will makes the law ; the public power secures its execution. All property is inviolable. No citizen can be arrested or punished except by legal trial. No citizen, even military, can be dismissed without trial.¹ Every citizen has the right to be admitted to all employments, professions, and dignities.² The abolition of personal serfdom without indemnity ; of serfhood of the glebe, with an indemnity to the lauded proprietors ; of compulsory militia service ; of the violation of public faith in letters intrusted to the mails ; and of all exclusive privileges, except temporarily for inventors, — should be decreed. The press should be free, the authors and printers being held responsible.

The executive power, said a multitude of the *cahiers*, should never interfere in the electoral assemblies. The kingdom should be divided into electoral districts. The elections should be made in the rural districts by communes ; in the towns, by arrondissements, and not by corporations.³

All the *cahiers* exacted the vote by poll, "to correct the inconveniences of the distinction of orders," said the *cahier* of Paris. The *cahier* of Rennes went much farther than that of Paris : it demanded the suppression of orders. "The States-General shall be composed of deputies from the whole nation, completely and uniformly represented throughout the kingdom, without distinction of orders, and without the number of the ecclesiastical or noble deputies exceeding the proportion of the number of voters of each of these two classes. It is by error that what is called the

¹ Admitted by the clergy.

² The nobility had made the same demand.

³ The *cahier* of Rennes desired that proxies should be admitted for widows whose husbands would have been entitled to vote.

Third Estate has been entitled an *order*: with or without the privileged classes, its name is the *People* or the *Nation*." The agents of the treasury, the depositaries of any part of the royal authority, and the agents of the seigniors, should neither be voters, nor eligible as deputies (*cahier* of Rennes). Some demanded voting by two or three degrees; others, the direct vote. The deputies of the States-General should not be considered as holders of particular powers, but as representatives of the nation. The States-General should assemble, by right and without convocation, at fixed epochs (some of the *cahiers* desired that they should be permanent: the majority, at least triennial). There should be no more humiliating distinctions for the Third Estate, no more *roture*, and no more *doléances*. In case the deputies of the clergy and the nobility should refuse to give their opinion in common and by poll, . . . the deputies of the Third Estate, representing twenty-four millions of men, *could and should still entitle themselves the national assembly*, despite the secession of the representatives of four hundred thousand individuals; . . . and should declare themselves ready to coöperate with his Majesty in the execution of all the objects which were designed to be submitted to the examination of the three orders united, offering to admit to their deliberations the deputies of the clergy and the nobility who might desire to coöperate therein (*cahiers* of Dijon, Dax, Saint-Sever, and Bayonne).

The deputies should be inviolable. The provinces and the electoral assemblies could prescribe no limiting condition to the deputies sent by them to the sovereign assembly of the nation (Paris, *extra-muros*). The principal source of the errors and abuses of the administration was the lack of a fundamental law, fixing, in a precise and authentic manner, the effects of the national constitution and the limit of the powers. The States should lay down the bases of this constitution, etc. The *cahiers* recognized the fact of hereditary royalty from male to male, etc., and of royal inviolability. The greater part laid down the principle, that the legislative power belongs to the nation,¹ and the executive power to the King, yet granted to the King the right of sanctioning the laws, and the participation in the right of initial action with the States-General. It was not by the establishment of an upper chamber, but by a triple deliberation in the assembly, that the disadvantages of precipitate decision should be prevented. The constitution made in the present States-General

¹ To the nation, conjointly with the King, said the *cahier* of Paris.

could be changed only by the representatives of the nation, appointed *ad hoc* by all the citizens. For the convocation of this national extraordinary assembly, the well-attested wish of two thirds of the provincial administrations would be required.

The abolition of State-prisons and *lettres de cachet* was demanded, and the establishment, on the site of the demolished Bastille, of a public square, with a column in the midst, bearing the inscription, "*To Louis XVI., the restorer of public liberty*" (*cahiers* of Paris and Montfort l'Amauri). The black code should be reformed, and the way paved for the abolition of slavery. The functions of the public power could not become property. Rights in violation of natural rights could never have become property. Ministers were responsible to the nation. Any one who might attempt to prevent the meeting of the States-General, or to reëstablish arbitrary power, should be punished as a traitor to the country.

All tax-payers should be inscribed without distinction on the same tax-lists. Concerning the provincial and municipal administrations, the *cahiers* of the Third Estate differed little from those of the other orders. The communes should be accountable to the districts, the districts to the provincial assemblies, the latter to a commission of the States-General. Concerning tribunals, courts of appeal, and justices of the peace, they likewise nearly agreed with the latter: some of the *cahiers* demanded the election of judges by all the members of the legal profession (*cahier* of Saint-Quentin). The majority desired the abolition of the seigniorial courts; others, only their reform. It was demanded that the cognizance of offences committed by soldiers should be attributed to the ordinary judges, save purely military crimes. Most of the *cahiers* demanded the framing of a single civil code for all France. "A shapeless mass of Roman laws and barbarous customs, of regulations and ordinances discordant with our manners, and without unity of principle, . . . cannot form a legislation worthy of a great nation" (*cahier* of Paris).

The abolition or restriction of feudal rights and *lignagers*, the abolition of entails, the abolition of the iniquitous law (*emptorem*) which authorized the purchaser of an estate to cancel the lease granted by the former proprietor, and the abolition of primogeniture, were demanded.¹

The *cahiers* demanded that prisoners for debt should be sepa-

¹ The *cahier* of Nivernais demanded the abolition of a local law of that province which excluded sisters and their children in favor of brothers and their children in collateral successions. This was a relic of the ancient barbarous laws.

rated from prisoners for crime ; that loans at legal interest should be permitted to all ; that measures should be taken for the institution of trial by jury ; that a new criminal code should be framed (with all the reforms demanded by the philosophers) ; that the confiscation of the property of criminals, and all stigma on their innocent families, should cease ; that capital punishment for theft should be abolished ; and that the penalty of death should be thenceforth decreed only for arson, poisoning, assassination, and rape (*cahier* of Nivernais).¹ Those acquitted should be indemnified. The barbarous edict of Henri II., condemning to death pregnant women who miscarried before declaring their pregnancy, should be abolished.

All agriculturists should be permitted to own muskets. Concerning lotteries, prostitution, etc., the *cahiers* of the Third Estate differed little from those of the clergy. Several manifested a regulating spirit, opposed to political economy, concerning the establishment of the price of bread and meat, and even of wages. Concerning public assistance, the spirit of Turgot reappeared, and was even exceeded. Work should be insured to all the able-bodied poor, means of relief to the infirm, and *loans on easy conditions* to laborers and artisans who lacked tools in order to work. Each commune should be bound to support its invalid poor, and a workshop for the poor should be established in every district. To secure the suppression of mendicity, a portion of the ecclesiastical property should be restored to its original destination. Provision should be made for the industrial education of foundlings.

Many of the *cahiers* demanded that there should be but two taxes,—a land-tax on real estate, and a personal tax on the income from personal property ; others, that the salt-tax and the aids at least should be replaced by two simple and uniform taxes, equally apportioned. A few even favored the taxation of real estate alone, like the physiocrats. If taxes on consumption were continued, they should not be laid upon articles of prime necessity. All duties which fettered commerce should be abolished.

Like the other orders, the Third Estate demanded a plan of national education, in which it claimed a place for the exercises which give the body a robust constitution. There should be free schools in every parish, where children should learn reading,

¹ This is one of the most remarkable of the *cahiers*. We quote it here on account of the lofty morality of its spirit, which at once desires the abolition of the death-penalty for simple offences against property, and its maintenance for personal assaults, placing in the same rank assassination and rape.

writing, and, in the towns, the elements of the useful arts. Standard books should be written for the schools, teaching the elementary principles of morality and of constitutional rights. The schools should be under the jurisdiction of the municipal and provincial assemblies. All the chairs in the universities and colleges should be open to competition. A school of public, national, and foreign law should be established (for diplomacy). A chair of ethics and of public law should be established in each university. Colleges should be founded in all the important towns. That principle should be modified in the régime of our colleges, which, by subjecting all the young men who attended them to the Catholic form of worship, necessarily kept away those who professed another form of religion (*cahier* of La Rochelle).

An aid fund should be established for the relief of agriculture. Prizes should be offered as an encouragement to agriculturists. Marine-plants and salt should belong to all. Landed proprietors should have the right to work the mines and quarries on their estates. The studs should be suppressed, and the stallions distributed through the country. Like the nobility, the Third Estate demanded that bounds should be set to the too great extent of farms, as prejudicial to population, as well as to abundance of cattle and manures.¹ Restitution should be made to the rural communes of their usurped common lands. The States-General should inquire whether it was most useful to preserve the common lands, or to divide them among the members of the commune.² The grain-trade should be free within the kingdom; exportation being interdicted when the provinces demanded it. France should be wooded anew.

Feudalism should be abolished (here follows a long list of feudal annuities, *champarts*, rights of redemption and withdrawal, banalities, various *corvées*, tolls, etc., including those ancient rights, as *outrageous as extravagant*; such as the *jambage*, replaced by a tax, and the *silence des grenouilles*³). Allodial property should be

¹ This opinion, hostile to agriculture on a large scale, is remarkable. The details prove that the point in question here was not only to prevent incumbents from letting their lands at wholesale to speculators who underlet them, but also to interdict effective agricultural unions.

² It was not sufficiently reflected that this partition between the *present members* despoiled the *members to come*.

³ The *cahier* of Rennes demands the abolition of "the barbarous usages under which five hundred thousand individuals are still groaning in Lower Brittany; such as *congeable domain*, *mote*, and *quevaize*, odious relics of feudal tyranny." This was the most marked wish of the colonists. The feudal origin of *congeable domain*, that

made universal. The natural right of destroying injurious animals on his own ground should be restored to every agriculturist. The captaincies (for the preservation of the King's hunting-grounds) should be abolished. The chase should be permitted to every owner of fifty arpents, and to every farmer of two hundred arpents (*cahier* of Étampes). Offences of the chase should be punished only by moderate fines. Proprietors of the right of the chase should enjoy it only from September 15 to May 1, for arable lands; and, after November 1, for vineyards.

There should be full liberty of commerce and manufactures at home, and protective restrictions abroad. Most of the *cahiers* demanded the abolition of trade wardenships and masterships while preserving regulations for apprenticeship. A national aid fund for commerce should be formed. A fund should be established, in every town of importance, to facilitate commerce and destroy usury. Weights and measures should be uniform. Foreign coasters should be excluded, and other measures taken for the protection of maritime commerce. A commercial code should be established.

As regarded the non-Catholics, all the *cahiers* agreed that there should be full liberty of conscience, and that there should be no exceptions to the principle of the eligibility of every citizen to all civil and military employments: but strong indications are still remarked of that prejudice of external unity which had survived in many minds the groundwork itself of belief; for instance, the *cahier* of Rennes, revolutionary as it was, desired that the Catholic religion should be the only public form of worship; and even the *cahier* of Paris admitted that the public order would allow of but one dominant religion. Nîmes, Nivernais, and others demanded that the free profession of every religion based on sound morality should be permitted, — the reëstablishment at least of the state of things prior to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Marriage should be permitted between persons of different faith. The liturgy should be uniform in the dominant church.¹ It was desirable that the public services and prayers should be in the French language (Paris, *extra-muros*). The too great number of feast-days should be lessened; the maintenance and constitutional consecration of the Gallican liberties, conformably to the

antique *usage* of the provinces of the Celtic tongue, is disputed. We cannot enter into the discussion: we only verify the popular hostility of '89. The *cahier* of Vannes agrees with that of Rennes, and explains in detail the abuses of this *usage*.

¹ Part of the *cahiers* of the clergy had expressed the same wish; but a Gallican liturgy was meant by this, and not the adoption of the Roman liturgy, as to-day.

declaration of 1682, were demanded, together with the abolition of the concordat, and of all transmission of money to Rome. This was the general cry. The majority desired that the bishops and the curés should again become elective : a few left the choice of the bishops to the King. The national and provincial councils should be reëstablished. The formulary of Alexander VII. should be abolished.¹ No more dispensations should be asked from Rome. Marriages between cousins-german should be permitted without dispensation. The ecclesiastical revenues should be restored to their original destination ; namely, the support of ministers of religion, the subsistence of the poor, and the maintenance of the places designed for divine service. The amelioration of the condition of curates and vicars, and the suppression of perquisites and alms, were demanded. Part of the *cahiers* demanded the suppression of all the convents ; others, at least the suppression of the mendicant orders ; others, only that means should be devised to render the religious orders more useful, to diminish the number of their houses, and to put off the taking of the vows until the age of twenty-five or thirty ; and that the monks should not lose their civil rights, but should be unable to dispose of their property in favor of monasteries. The revenues of the abbeys in commendam and the monasteries suppressed, and a part of the revenues of the wealthiest bishoprics, should be applied to the colleges, hospitals, etc., and to the payment of the debts of the clergy, and also to that of the public debt. A part of the property of the clergy should be sold for the payment of their debt. Some of the *cahiers* called for the suppression of the tithes ; others, for a very large reduction, with a regulation concerning their application ; several, for their transformation into a land-tax for the support of the officiating clergymen, the church-buildings, and the relief of the poor.

Hereditary nobility being necessarily nothing but a token of respect, a preference of public opinion for the descendants of eminent men, it could not be made the subject of a law rendering this preference independent of public opinion, and of the merit of those who were the object of it. Hereditary nobility should therefore confer no legal prerogative, no exemption from public burdens, no special right to national representation nor to any place (*cahier* of Rennes). Nobility should no longer be purchasable with money. An honorary and civic reward, purely per-

¹ Which obliged ecclesiastics to swear that they believed in the *point of fact* decided by the Pope against Jansenius.

sonal, and not hereditary, should be instituted by the States-General, which, on their nomination, should be conferred by the King upon citizens of whatever class who should have merited it by the eminence of their patriotic virtues and their services (*cahiers* of Paris and Toul).

The troops belonging to the nation could not, without rendering themselves guilty of the crime of rebellion and high treason, favor the violation of the constitution or the national laws, or obstruct the liberty of the assemblies of the States-General or Provincial by preventing their formation or reassembling, or by effecting their dispersion. No officer or soldier could act hostilely in his country, except in cases anticipated by positive laws, and this under the penalty of death, as a traitor to his country.¹ No military man should be deprived of his place without trial. The army should be composed only of national troops. All enlistment should be voluntary (in time of peace). The troops, in time of peace, should be employed on the public works.

The last page of the last volume of the General Summary of the *cahiers* leaves an impression, the tragicalness of which nothing can surpass. This is an extract from the *cahier* of Rouen, proposing that the nation should erect at Paris, in the midst of a public square to be called the *Place des États-Généraux*, a monument dedicated to Louis XVI. in memory of this new compact of alliance between the King and his people!

Instead of the *Place des États-Généraux*, we had the *Place de la Révolution*: in the midst of this place, all know what monument was erected to the last King of ancient France!

It would be impossible to comprehend so terrible a vicissitude in less than four years, if we saw only the public acts and official words of '89, and if we believed that every thing was expressed in the definitive *cahiers* of the bailiwicks,—in this measured and temperate result of all the movement of ideas produced amidst the assemblies of all degrees. The *cahiers* of the Third Estate were the last attempt at conciliation between the nation and the ancient government; the last effort to transform traditional royalty peacefully, and to associate it with the new order of things. The moderation of the Third Estate proves that it felt the immense gravity of the situation. Agreeing with the other orders on the destruction of administrative arbitrariness, on individual liberty, on the freedom of labor, on what would to-day be styled decentralization, on judicial reform, and on many other social needs; agreeing with

¹ Admitted by the *cahiers* of the nobility.

the clergy against the privileges of the nobility, and with the nobility against the privileges of the clergy; proclaiming the principle of property, like the other orders, but attaching thereto quite a different meaning, the meaning of the philosophers, and especially of the economists, and recognizing only individual property¹ and public property; desiring, in fine, in addition to the other orders, and *absolutely* insisting on, the unity of the National Assembly, — the Third Estate nevertheless, at least the majority, did not even demand the formal abolition of the ancient *Social Constitution*,² and of the distinction of the three orders: the majority still seemed tacitly to consent for half a million of citizens, organized separately from the masses, to preserve as many representatives in the National Assembly as twenty-five millions of citizens! By much greater reason, it did not bring royalty into question while proclaiming the sovereignty of the nation. Are we thence to conclude that there was nothing in public opinion beyond the wishes officially expressed in the assemblies? — that men were at heart as *royalist*, as *Gallican*, as the language of the *cahiers* denotes? This conclusion would not be well founded: nevertheless, they were sincere. They sought to bind the future to the past, for the Church as for the State, without closely interrogating the bounds of possibility; without really asking themselves whether ancient royalty, with its complex and confused traditions, concentrated and unified at length in the monarchy of divine right according to Louis XIV. and Bossuet, was adapted to become the head and hand of a free and elective government; and whether the generation reared by Voltaire and Rousseau was in the moral condition suited to restore the elective church of ancient Christianity. It was because communities never plunge voluntarily into an unknown future: God precipitates them thither in spite of themselves. And what a future! What society, since the world began, had ever seen so gigantic a problem propounded to it?

A deputy from Auvergne, Malouet, urged the minister Necker to respond to this attempt at conciliation made by the Third Estate by persuading the King to seize the initiative, to decide the question of the vote by poll and the unity of the assembly, and to present to the States-General the bases of a constitu-

¹ Which could not comprise the pretended exceptional rights, contrary to natural right and to true civil law.

² *Social Constitution*: we employ this term designedly. France had a social constitution, since society was organized there upon a certain plan: she had not, or had no longer, a political constitution, since this organization did not end in the regular working of defined institutions.

tion in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the *cahiers* of the Third Estate. Malouet desired that Louis XVI., not having been wise enough to be the author of reformation, should constitute himself the leader of revolution; but the depth of this revolution Malouet was far from fathoming. However this may be, it would at least have been entering with a bold mien the domain of the unknown. The proposition did not even reach Louis XVI., who would have inevitably rejected it. Necker entrenched himself behind the *liberty of the States-General*: it was for them alone to decide concerning themselves. An illusion of self-love lurked under a scruple worthy of respect: Necker fancied that the Third Estate and the privileged orders, after the first dissensions, would request him to be the arbiter of their debates, and that he would have the glory of settling them by some middle course. He did not see that his fragile individuality was about to disappear before the first steps of the colossus of the Revolution.

Nothing remained for the deputies of the Third Estate to do but to act in the plenitude of the right of the nation; to march straight forward through all obstacles and all resistance, with or without their instructions, not only if these instructions were mute, but if they were insufficient, contradictory, or inapplicable. The theory of imperative instructions, retrospectively evoked at times by the champions of the ancient régime, is that of federative republics, where independent political bodies associate within limits and for objects which are determined. It could not be that of a unitary state. A great nation being unable to assemble entire on a Champ de Mars to dictate its intentions to its representatives, the different sections of this same nation, deliberating alone, are very far from giving the equivalent of the sentiment which the nation would have had united; and the representatives of these different sections, when they unite in a single body, express the national sentiment in a manner much less imperfect than would be done by the wishes of the sections simply placed in juxtaposition. The deputies then cease to represent localities, and become the representatives of the nation. None can deny that something very different from the collection of the isolated sentiments of individuals is evolved from the union of individualities: the formation of the collective sentiment is one of the great mysteries of the moral world.¹

¹ Mirabeau had been the first openly to deny, before the States of Provence, the right of any subdivision whatever of the kingdom to limit the national sovereignty,

The opening of the States-General, announced for April 29, did not take place until May 5. The famous procession on the eve of the opening, in which the King and the three orders figured together,—the peaceful inauguration of the era of tempests,—has been often described. Peace was manifested in the forms and rites: war was visible in things still more than in hearts; it was visible even in that humble and sombre costume imposed on the Third Estate by the insulting etiquette of the court, and worn with a pride which resembled defiance before the stage gilding and plumes that adorned the nobility.

The next day, May 5, the King opened the States by a few words, in which there was nothing striking but the total absence of initial action. When he put on his hat, on concluding, the members of the privileged orders followed his example, according to custom. Part of the members of the Third Estate did the same. A great commotion ran through the assembly. The King took off his hat, not daring to reject, and unwilling to authorize, the equality arrogated by the Third Estate. The time had gone by when the deputies of the people knelt at the arrival of the King!

The keeper of the seals made a flowery and generally vague harangue, in which he nevertheless appeared to approve of the vote by poll, if this change were effected with the free consent of the States-General. Necker was still less explicit in his lengthy speech, detailed to excess concerning the finances, and more philosophical and moral than political on all other matters. He counselled them to vote first by order, that the privileged classes might have the merit of voluntarily sacrificing their pecuniary exemptions; then of examining in what cases they could unite, and in what cases vote separately. This was puerile. The question should have been authoritatively decided. The powerlessness of the minister became evident after that of the King.

Before the question of the vote in common necessarily came that of the verification of the powers in common, which did not absolutely decide the second, but which had a strong bearing upon it. May 6, the ministry made an attempt to decide this question in point of fact according to the wishes of the Third Estate. A placard announced that *the locality designed for the*

"which resides in the collective representatives alone." Many enlightened men felt that imperative instructions led to an inextricable difficulty. The Third Estate, says the *cahier* of Nîmes, among others, "has set forth the wishes of the people: it has left to its deputies the care of modifying them."—*Résumé général des cahiers*, etc., t. III. p. 542.

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RENÉ GUY LE CHAPELIER.

*Né à Rennes, en 1755.
Député à L'Assemblée Nationale en 1789.
Décapité le 17 avril 1794*

reception of the deputies would be ready at nine in the morning. This locality was the great hall in which the opening session had been held.¹ The Third Estate repaired thither. The other orders did not appear. The Third Estate learned that they were assembled in the halls which had been assigned for their particular sessions.²

The Third Estate waited. At half-past two, it was informed that the clergy had just voted the separate verification by one hundred and thirty-three votes against one hundred and fourteen, and the nobility by one hundred and eighty-eight votes against forty-seven. The Third Estate considered these decisions as null and void, and the next morning, on the proposition of Mounier, *semi-officially* sent some of its members to invite the other deputies to unite with the commons, who were waiting for this union before beginning to verify the powers. The clergy, retracting their steps, proposed a mixed commission to examine the question anew, and suspended the verification which they had commenced (May 7). The nobility did not reply till May 12: they consented to appoint commissioners, but after having declared themselves legally organized by a majority of one hundred and ninety-three votes against thirty-one, which rendered the commission useless in advance.

The profound emotion that was manifested on the benches of the Third Estate indicated that the great struggle was approaching. A Breton deputy, Le Chapelier, proposed to notify the clergy and nobility that "the commons would recognize as legal representatives only those whose powers should have been examined by commissions appointed in general assembly; that, after the opening of the States, there were no longer any deputies of orders or provinces, but solely representatives of the nation; and that the deputies of the commons therefore invited the deputies of the clergy and the nobility to unite with them in the hall of the States, and to form themselves into States-General, for the

¹ This was the same *Salle des Menus* in which the two assemblies of the Notables had been held.

² The Third Estate, according to ancient usage, had no other place of meeting than the hall of the general sessions. This had been, as it were, a tacit avowal that the Third Estate was the body of the nation. The court had felt this inference, and had thought of assigning a particular locality to the Third Estate; but this project had been thwarted by a trifling circumstance. The administration of the stables would not give up a riding-school demanded by one of the ministers for the third hall. Whatever might have been done, however, the Third Estate was everywhere felt to be the nation.

purpose of verifying the powers of all the representatives of the nation." The majority wished to carry moderation to its farthest limits: it postponed as premature the motion of Le Chapelier, and accepted the conference with the other orders. The privileged orders announced their abandonment of their pecuniary exemptions: this was known in advance, and failed of effect. The conference none the less proved abortive, and the nobles maintained the separate verification of the powers (May 26). The clergy had not yet decided definitively. The Third Estate, on the proposition of Mirabeau, adjured them to range themselves "on the side of reason, justice, and truth."

The clergy were shaken. A great number of the curés and some of the bishops wished to respond to the appeal. The court interfered. May 28, a letter from the King requested the commissioners of the three orders to resume their conferences in the presence of the keeper of the seals and the royal commissioners. Louis XVI. had been the instrument of an intrigue plotted between the aristocratic prelates, the circle of the Queen, and that of the Count d'Artois (*the Polignac committee*). It was sought to prevent the union of the clergy, and to come to the aid of the nobility. The nobility on the same day decreed, by a majority of two hundred and two votes against sixteen, that deliberation by order, and the *veto* of each order, were *constitutional to the monarchy*. To accept the renewal of the conferences, after such an act, was derision on the part of the nobility. The Third Estate made a last effort at forbearance. M. Necker, who had taken his place among the royal commissioners, proposed that the powers should first be verified separately; that those only upon which difficulties arose should be referred to the commissioners of the three orders; and that, lastly, if the three orders could not agree, the decision of the contested election should be referred to the royal council. The clergy assented. The Third Estate, resolved to refuse, did not hasten to reply, and, to its great joy, was anticipated by the refusal of the nobility.¹ The conferences were closed (June 9).

The gauntlet was thrown down. June 10, the powerful political metaphysician who had put and resolved the question, *What is the Third Estate?* — the Abbé Sicypès, the deputy of the Third Estate of Paris, — proposed to address to the deputies of the clergy and the nobility a last *summons* to come to the hall of the States to concur in the common verification of the powers, with a notice

¹ Not a formal refusal, but a nominal acceptance on conditions which completely changed the plan.

that the general roll-call of the bailiwicks would be made within an *hour*, and that all who *failed to appear* would be *judged by default*.

The motion was almost unanimously adopted, with some mitigation of form: the word *invitation* was substituted for *summons*, a *day* for an *hour*, and *verification, whether present or absent*, for *judgment by default against those who failed to appear*.

The verification of the powers commenced on the evening of June 12. The nobility maintained their resolutions. The clergy deliberated without coming to a conclusion. From the 13th to the 15th, ten curés, among whom was the celebrated Grégoire, responded to the call of the Third Estate. "I come," said the Curé Marolle, the deputy of the clergy of Saint-Quentin, "to acknowledge the necessity of the common verification of the powers of a *national assembly*." Others prepared to follow them; but the call of the bailiwicks was already ended, and the verification completed with respect to all the members who had answered the call.

The decisive moment had come. The assembly must be organized: under what title?

The destiny of a great system of society, of a whole political world, was suspended on a word! Since the first councils of Christendom, there had not been a discussion of like importance on earth.

Divers propositions were opposed to each other. A number of eminent men entered the lists; but the discussion was concentrated in reality upon two heads, — Sieyès and Mirabeau.¹

"This assembly," said Sieyès, "is already composed of representatives sent by at least ninety-six hundredths of the nation. Such a body of deputations cannot be rendered inactive by the absence of the deputies of a few bailiwicks or a few classes of citizens. . . . The common work of national restoration may and should be commenced without delay by all the deputies present, *and they should pursue it without interruption as without obstacles*." And he proposed the title of *Assembly of the known and verified Representatives of the French Nation*.

The form of this title was not a happy one. It was necessary to present to the masses simpler and more vivid forms, in which the idea was concentrated in a word, in a flash. But the idea

¹ The only notable proposition, apart from those of Sieyès and Mirabeau, was that of Mounier, who desired the meeting organized as *the legitimate assembly of the representatives of the majority of the nation, in the absence of the minority*.

was nevertheless evident to all who knew how to comprehend it. What he had written, Sieyès desired should be done. *The Third Estate was the Nation*. The language of Sieyès was calm, rigorous, and inflexible, like his pamphlet: that of Mirabeau broke forth in contradictory emotions, like the cry of a soul in conflict with itself.

Mirabeau attacked the division of *orders*, a word *devoid of meaning*, and inveighed against the pretension of the privileged classes to a collective veto and a separate action; yet he opposed any title which would be equivalent to that of the States-General, and would constitute the Third Estate alone the sovereign representative of the nation. "You will not have the sanction of the King: it is necessary to all that you are about to do. The people will not sustain you. They aspire as yet only to material relief, and will not understand political metaphysics. They would sell their rights for bread!" Mirabeau, who had so strongly opposed imperative instructions, went so far as to fall back on instructions which did not authorize the deputies to arrogate to themselves the title proposed by Sieyès! He conjured up spectacles of anarchy, despotism, and ruin, if open conflict were entered upon; and concluded by proposing the title of *Assembly of the Representatives of the People*, that is to say, of the plebeian masses.

The reason of this was, that the passionate writer, the stormy tribune, felt himself outstripped by the cold and trenchant logic of the political theorist. Although he had recognized national sovereignty and the principles of the *Social Contract* in his works, Mirabeau had always desired revolution with royalty. He felt that the sovereignty of the people was about to arise from the discussion, and to swallow up every thing; that revolution was about to be made without royalty; and, on accosting the realities themselves, he *saw the dream of a royal democracy vanish*. His mind discerned the unheard-of sufferings, the heroic calamities, through which France must pass to create for herself a new existence.¹ It was death between two lives. His mind was too clear-sighted, and his heart not sufficiently stoical, to brave this formidable future. He wished to arrest the movement, to compound with the past: for him, in turn, it was too late!

His proposition was rejected: the long-standing disdain of the privileged orders still weighed upon that great name, *the People*.

¹ A still obscure deputy, Barère, had just uttered a great speech: "You are called upon to begin history anew." — *The Point de Jour* (Barère's journal), No. 1.

The title of *Representatives of the People*, which another assembly was soon to render so terrible to the kings of Europe, was rejected as too humble.

The impetuous Mirabeau had recoiled. The impassible Sieyès rose, and pronounced the word of destiny : —

“I change my motion,” he said : “I propose to substitute for the name of *known and verified Representatives* the title of NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.”

The thunderbolt had rent the cloud. Light appeared. Four hundred and ninety-one votes against ninety adopted Sieyès’ motion without restriction, and as an act of SOVEREIGNTY.

ANCIENT FRANCE WAS ENDED.

The Revolution was consummated by law. Nothing remained but to deduce the consequences. The society of the three orders was legally abolished by the representatives of the immense majority of the nation. Instead of privileged orders, there were only more or less distinguished citizens. Royalty was subordinated : it was no longer any thing but a political machine, the existence of which was not essential. The principle of the sovereignty of the nation one and indivisible had replaced the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV., and the ancient monarchy of the States-General and the parliaments, the sovereignty of the King, and the hierarchy of the privileged orders.

THE NEW WORLD HAD BEGUN.

CONCLUSION.¹

FROM the summit of those stormy heights of '89 which separate two worlds, let us look backwards, to survey, at a glance, the destinies of ancient France, which contained all the presages of the future of modern France. The institutions, the customs, the social forms, have disappeared: the essential groundwork, the nature of France, has not changed. It is still the same being, as it were, which continues, and will continue, to develop in the good or bad use of its own energies. Modern France, ancient France, Gaul, are one and the same moral person. France existed long before calling itself France, — a baptismal and adopted name, under which its natural name has become extinct.

From the origin of historic times, the soil of France appears peopled by a lively, witty, imaginative, and eloquent race; inclined at once to faith and to doubt, to the exaltation of the soul, and the allurements of the senses; enthusiastic and derisive; spontaneous and logical; sympathetic, and restive to discipline; endowed with practical sense, and inclined to illusions; more disposed to brilliant acts of devotion than to patient and continued efforts; fickle as to facts and persons, persevering as to the essential tendencies and conduct of life; alike active and comprehensive; loving to know for the sake of knowing, and to act for the sake of acting; loving war above all else, less for conquest than for glory and adventure, the attraction of danger and of what is unknown; uniting, in fine, to an extreme sociability, an indomitable individuality, and a spirit of independence which absolutely rejected the yoke of external realities and fatal forces.

In this antique society were developed, on a primitive, patriarchal foundation, two dominant principles, the religious principle and the heroic principle, combined in a belief in the highest degree calculated to *cultivate strength*,² according to one of its own maxims, and to inspire men with contempt for death by the

¹ Written in 1854.

² "Honor the Gods; do no evil to others; cultivate strength." — Druidical Triad, cited by Diogène de Laërte.

certainly of living again. The Gallic belief, Druidism, soaring above the wholly terrestrial religions of Greece and Rome, presented, in the recesses of the West, a theological and philosophical development equal to that of the great religious systems of the East, but in a spirit decidedly opposed to Indo-Egyptian Pantheism, and which appears to have had a moral affinity only with the *mazdeism* of Zoroaster. The victorious conflict of liberty and will with the fatal powers, and the indestructible human individuality rising progressively from the lowest degree of being, by *knowledge* and *strength*, to the undefined summits of heaven, without ever becoming confounded in the Creator,—such appear to have been the bases of the Druidical faith, and the secret of Gallic intrepidity and independence. The firmest, the clearest, the most fully developed notion of the immortality and the destiny of the soul was the essential characteristic of the Bardic philosophy, the offspring of the Druids.

Such a race, resting on so formidable a lever, seemed destined to invade the world. It swept over the earth triumphantly, agitated, astonished, and terrified it, but did not rule it in a lasting manner. It had within itself the materials for a great nation: it was not a nation. These materials lacked the cement necessary to hold them together. This religion inspired a wholly individual strength: it did not teach social duty with the authority of those local and wholly terrestrial religions which reposed on the divinity of the country; neither had it within itself that flame of divine and human love, of universal charity, which it was reserved for Christianity to diffuse over the world. The forces of Gaul did not work together harmoniously, and turned against themselves. These powerful individualities ended only in a weak and anarchical society. The patriarchal tribes grouped together into warlike democracies, subject to the moral authority of a great priesthood recruited by affiliation,—a learned corporation, and not an hereditary caste. It was the apogee of ancient Gaul; but this state did not continue. Social inequality increased: the local aristocracies grew with the progress of wealth, and monopolized the advantages of civilization, which developed imperfectly. Influences became hereditary: the tribes divided into clans, grouped around a few powerful men; and there finally ceased to be but two classes of importance in Gaul,—the Druids and the Knights, or, to speak in modern parlance, the clergy and the nobility, who disputed the power with each other, and agreed only in rejecting hereditary royalty, antipathetic to the genius of Gaul.

The decline rapidly advanced ; the moral elasticity became weakened, the people enervated, the nobility a prey to intestine dissensions. Foreigners advanced. Gaul was invaded on one side by the most strongly organized political and military system of civilization that had ever appeared upon earth ; on the other, by a barbarism systematically hostile to all development, all wealth, and all progress. Of the two competitors, Rome prevailed over Germania. The dissensions of Gaul, despite tardy and desperate efforts, threw her under the sword of the conqueror. The prestige of Helleno-Latin civilization completed the work of conquest. The nobility became Latinized, and blended with Roman society : the sacerdotal body was proscribed. The superstitions of the South invaded Gaul, where they would leave their traces only in the classic form of literature and the arts. The political genius of Rome entered more thoroughly into the Gallic nature, and sensibly modified it : it gave our fathers order, discipline, moderation, gravity, and circumspection, the administrative and centralizing spirit with its great advantages in the external organization of society, and also its perilous tendency to substitute mechanism for life in the body politic. Latin materialism was destined also to leave too many vestiges among us, by combining with the critical and derisive tendency, which counterbalances, as it were, our tendency to enthusiasm.

We owe to Rome, by way of compensation, a progress of a higher order than an aptitude for material organization ; namely, the introduction of that Roman law, transformed by Greek philosophy, which became in so many respects *written reason* and the *code of humanity*, and which enlightened and enlarged the generous instincts of our primitive local laws. To *Roman unity*, to *Roman peace*, also belongs the merit of having prepared the ground for the religion of *love and union* ; Christianity, to germinate and grow. The gospel at last manifested in the West that *spirit of life*, that double principle of love in God and the Mediator-Word, which Druidism had lacked to vivify its sublime notions of human destiny. Gaul found again in Christianity, with a higher idea of the divine nature, that certainty of human immortality, if not that vast system of the destinies of the soul, which distinguished it among all other nations. It embraced the new faith, and speedily exercised a lofty and salutary influence over the formation of dogmas ; it powerfully contributed to repel the Montanist and Gnostic heresies ; and attempted, by the organ of its great apostle, St. Martin of Tours, to stifle in the germ the

fatal principle of religious persecution which was to cover Christianity with blood and crime during long ages! It defended the Trinity against Arius; and, faithful to its tradition, attempted to defend liberty against St. Augustine.

Christianity and the Roman law did not suffice, however, to insure the existence of the Empire, or to revive the nationalities which it had absorbed. Both cosmopolitan (and this was their glory), they addressed themselves to the human race. Something more was needed upon earth: nations were needed among whom might be apportioned the different functions of the human race. The transitional work of the Roman empire was accomplished, since Religion and Law were born, and were sure of surviving it. The barbarians, whom Providence had warded off five centuries before, now might come.

They came: the Empire was dismembered. Gaul, unable to regain an independent existence by itself alone, at least made a choice among its conquerors: it gave itself to the Franks, and rejected the other barbarians. The Frankish race, as valiant as the Gauls in their most heroic age, became the sword of orthodox Christianity against the Arian barbarians, and the *Trinitarian* bishops shared the dominion of Gaul with the kings of the Franks. The times when the Druids and the warrior-chieftains reigned together were again beheld, a shade more monarchical, however, since the military command was now concentrated among the members of a single family. This was, nominally, primitive FRANCE,—Gallo-Germano-Roman France. The Franks formed the cement thereof, and gave it their name, which it was never to lose. The different elements of the French nationality were now in juxtaposition; but the French nationality was not yet born. There was, as yet, neither a French people nor a French language. This *first France* was yet only Frankish Gaul; that is, the third phase of our origin: and it must even be added, that those Franks from whom we derive our name were destined to leave among us infinitely fewer traces than the Romans; they did little more than revive in Gaul those of the Gallic elements which corresponded to the Germanic elements: as to the characteristics especially peculiar to the Germanic race, we retained almost nothing of them, unless in a few of the northern and eastern provinces.

Frankish Gaul had two periods: the first was that of the Merovingians, the allies of the Gallic bishops, and the conquerors of the Arian Goths; the second was that of the Carolingians,

the conquerors of the Saracens and the Saxons, and the allies of the Roman Papacy. They saved Europe from Moslem invasion, made a conquest of Germania for Christianity, and reëstablished the Roman empire in behalf of the Franks, supported by the popes, who conferred on Frankish royalty a semi-sacerdotal character by the revival of the ancient Hebraic coronation, and who received from it, in exchange, a decisive support in their spiritual pretensions and their temporal aggrandizement.

The germs of nationality, which were striving to grow, were stifled for some time beneath that cumbersome Frankish empire which enveloped, with Gaul, all Germania, a part of the Slavic regions, three-fourths of Italy, and the north of Spain: but this factitious unity, despite the coöperation of the clergy, who desired a single empire like a single faith, was broken by the instincts of the peoples; and, from the dismemberment of the empire of Charlemagne, at length arose the modern nations, the revival of the great races of antiquity under a new form.

This time, it was finally France; no longer Germanic France, but *Welsh* France; as it is called by the Germans, Gallic France. The Franks were confounded in the Gallo-Roman masses: there were no longer either *Romans* or *Barbarians*, but *Frenchmen*, with the sign of a peculiar idea, a national function,—a new language, at first called *Roman*, or Neo-Roman, on account of the preponderance of Latin in our vocabulary, which the Church had so much contributed to secure: this language would become less and less *Roman*; and the logical and metaphysical genius of Gaul, aroused in the philosophy of the Middle Ages, would give it, by degrees, a form wholly *sui generis*.

France, meanwhile, had appeared on the point of perishing in its birth. It seemed as if, with the empire of the Franks, all society was about to be dissolved. Anarchy prevailed everywhere. The Norman pirates, who ravaged France unceasingly, seemed vultures preying upon a corpse. A predestined city, Paris, at length arrested these latest barbarians, who became a part of Christian society in turn, as the Franks had done; and the centre of the body politic of France was formed around Paris, in that basin of the Seine so happily planned by Nature. The feudal world emerged from the chaos of the ninth century.

Its roots struck deep into the past. It was an ancient Celtic groundwork revived by the Germans. Fancy the primordial element of Gallic society, the tribe, effaced, and the secondary element, clanship, left alone, and attached to the soil, and you

have the feudal régime. The hierarchy of fiefs was simply a hierarchy of clans, placed one above another, and ending in a supreme chief, the King, whom the feudal nobility wished to maintain elective like the ancient chiefs or magistrates of the Gallic tribes, and who was rendered hereditary only by the logical consequences of a certain analogy of situation,¹ and by the support of the Church, alike in favor of monarchy and of primogenitureship.

Feudalism was a hierarchy of faith and honor, of conditional and free services among the feudatories; a hierarchy of oppression and iniquity to all who were not of the warrior and feudal caste, and who were considered as outside of the law. It tended to absorb the clergy in its ranks, and to thrust back simple freemen into the condition of serfs of the glebe, much more harshly treated than among the ancient Gauls.

From the midst of this régime, the name of which remains so unpopular among us, nevertheless was evolved an ideal worthy of admiration, and respected by the classes and generations most hostile to feudalism,—the chivalric ideal, that is, protection to the weak and the oppressed, assigned as an aim to heroism; fraternal equality among the warriors devoted to this Christian work; a wholly new conception of love, by which constancy in love became a religion like honor; a marvellous outgrowth of the Gallic genius fructified by Christian inspiration.² From the same sources, at once Celtic and Christian, sprang the mediæval art,—that unheard-of aspiration of the soul towards heaven; an art in which neither Papal Rome nor Germania can claim a share, and wholly French, like chivalric poetry.³ While the sentiment of France manifested itself with such power, its thought was disciplined in the rude gymnasium of scholastic philosophy, another product of our soil.⁴

In the thirteenth century, French society of the Middle Ages was in its greatest lustre. By its poetry, art, and scholastic philosophy; by its external action on England, Italy, Spain, and the East; by the leadership of the crusades, that great European re-

¹ Hereditary transmission being the principle on which the fiefs were based, the highest fief necessarily tended to become hereditary like the rest.

² See our vol. III. p. 351, *et seq.*, concerning the primitive types of the romances of chivalry, written in the Celtic language.

³ The distinguishing shade between these two great manifestations is, that the poetry is more aristocratic, and the art more democratic.

⁴ Scholastic philosophy did not belong to us as exclusively as chivalric poetry and ogival architecture; but it had its great centre at Paris.

action against Islamism,—it had placed itself at the head of Christendom. Feudalism having failed in absorbing the clergy, and subjugating the freemen of the towns, a new element had made room for itself by the side of the two ecclesiastical and aristocratic elements. A multitude of petty, municipal republics had arisen amidst the numerous donjons and steeples of the manor-houses and monasteries. Royalty had grown : Janus was three-faced. The King was the head of the fiefs, the heir of the Frankish monarchs, to the nobility ; the anointed of the Lord, to the clergy ; the representative of the Roman Cæsar, of the régime of civil equality under one master, to the legists, who reappeared in turn in this new world.

This system of society attained its relative perfection at the beginning of the fourteenth century. At that time, what was called the French Constitution was fully organized. The bourgeois and vassal republics became the bourgeoisie, the Third Estate ; and, in the States-General, the Third Estate figured by the side of the nobility and the clergy. There were no longer two political orders as at the time of the invasion of Cæsar, at the time of the Frankish empire, and at the beginning of feudalism : there were three. The clergy represented science ; the nobility, martial strength ; the Third Estate, free labor. Royalty was unity super-added to this triplicity : it represented the nationality as a whole. From the origin of this institution, one might have discerned by what cause it would some day fall. This artificial disruption of the national functions, at the very moment when it was solemnly organized, no longer corresponded to the exact reality. The legists, the head of the Third Estate, disputed the scientific domain with the clergy ; and neither was the Third Estate excluded from arms.

The Constitution of the *Three Estates* began, however, with grandeur by affirming the national independence against the cosmopolitan pretensions of the papacy, which claimed the succession of the Cæsars. The system of Gregory VII. was definitively shattered by the Three Estates of France.

The political constitution was scarcely fixed when the foundation of the nationality itself was assailed. England, that new society so nearly related to our own, and formed of a triple Celtic, Saxon, and Franco-Norman element,¹ precipitated itself

¹ England is especially, in reality, a Gallo-Teutonic people, as France is, especially, a Gallo-Roman people ; with this difference, that in France the Roman element was only a form modifying the Gallic substratum, while in England the Teutonic element (Saxon and Danish) combined largely with the primitive stratum which it covered.

upon France, and attempted in its turn to impose masters upon the latter, as it had received them thence. The decline of feudalism was evident at the first encounter. The French nobility was conquered. The Third Estate made a first effort to possess itself of the national destinies: it failed. Foreign and civil war united to dismember France. The great nobles precipitated the ruin of the State. The foreigners were in Paris. Every thing seemed lost. Royalty, clergy, nobility, bourgeoisie, all were lifeless, or were rending each other in the death-struggle.

Salvation came from the lowest depths of the people,—from among the husbandmen and the shepherds. The mysterious genius of Gaul awakened in the soul of a child,—a young girl inspired by Heaven, who took up the sword which had fallen from the hands of the strong, and drove the conquerors before her like a flock struck with terror. Betrayed by the King, whose crown she had restored, by the nobility, whose affronts she had effaced, and by the clergy, who failed to recognize in her the messenger of the Lord, the Messiah of the nationality, she repeated Calvary, and, by her Passion, redeemed France.

The work of deliverance was finished. France rose transformed and revived from that immense crisis which had well-nigh destroyed her. The great political and military feudal system had fallen. The Third Estate was strengthened socially; but the political advantage reverted to royalty, which revived, supported by a standing army and a permanent tax, by the aid of which it was speedily able to postpone, and later to abolish, in fact, the States-General and the constitution left without guarantees. Royalty held under its immediate tenure the greater part of the ancient Gallic soil. Wars and alliances, alike successful, had gradually brought almost all the great fiefs into the hands of the King.

The Middle Ages were no more. Their idea was exhausted. Their arts were extinct or transformed. A spirit at once antique and modern spread over Europe. Greek and Roman antiquity revived, to preside over the first phase of the modern world, emerged from the too narrow circle in which Christianity had been imprisoned since the Fathers of the Church. Secular science emancipated itself from ecclesiastical science, to march to the conquest of the laws of Nature, and of that boundless universe of which the Middle Ages had been ignorant. Royalty seconded this impulse of civilization, but made the latter pay dearly for its services by ceasing to labor for the complement of the national territory, in order to plunge France into mad and unjust wars of

conquest abroad. In the midst of these wars, France was seized with the religious crisis which rent Christendom in twain in the sixteenth century. She, the initiator of Europe during all the Middle Ages, the mediator between the North and the South, this time lost the initiative: she was disputed as a prey between the North and the South, between the Pope and Luther, between Rome and Germany, as in the time of Cæsar! Would not the genius of Gaul give its own solution, its own affirmation, in this great debate?

It gave its solution, indeed, long after, but a solution of prudence, of preservation rather than of affirmation, a solution insufficient to impose its authority on the two parties, and to give the world a new impulse, namely, Gallicanism, which guaranteed France, it is true, from sharing the profound decline of Spain and Italy, and which refused infallibility to the Roman pontiff, but which recognized his supremacy and spiritual direction, and consequently maintained the subordination of the religious spirit of France to an external authority. Gallicanism did not prevent France from being swept away in the frightful whirlwind of the religious wars, and becoming the battle-field of the two European factions. A royal race was sunk in blood and degradation. The nationality was again in peril. The formidable leader of the papal party, the Austro-Spanish monarch, strove to absorb France. She tore herself from his hands. A hero repulsed the *Demon of the South*, and closed the religious wars by recognizing religious liberty in favor of the new Christian sects, and treading under foot the system of persecution which had perverted the gospel and tyrannized over Christendom for the last six centuries.

Royalty, for a moment overpowered and submerged, reorganized itself in altogether new conditions of strength and activity, and again became the energetic expression of the nationality. The anarchy of the princes and nobles which had raised its head was crushed forever. France regained the initiative, and speedily the preponderance, in Europe, with extraordinary splendor. She vigorously resumed the offensive against the House of Austria. She recommenced the work of her territorial completion, and saved Protestantism and the liberty of the human mind in Germany. She founded the European balance of power which dispelled the dream of universal monarchy inherited from the Cæsars by the popes, the emperors, and the House of Austria, and which

contained the idea of nationalities equal, independent, and fraternally associated ; that is, the future of the world.

The initiative was reconquered with the same power in things of the mind. The heroic personality of the Gallic genius had given in the fifteenth century, by Jeanne Darc, its most sublime manifestation in the domain of sentiment : it manifested itself not less solemnly, in the seventeenth century, in the domain of reason. Descartes regenerated philosophy, and the human mind itself, by extricating it from the weight of ancient authorities, of tradition accumulated for centuries, and stripping it naked, so to speak, in order to revivify it by plunging it into its eternally living spring. Reason was freed. Liberty reigned in the sphere of abstract ideas : it would descend into the sphere of realities. Poetry soared on high with a flight equal to that of philosophy. The same genius of liberty and will inspired the immortal ideal of Corneille.

Minds, powerfully reinvigorated, proceeded with like energy in all directions. Letters, which gave to France its great age, the rival of the ages of Pericles and Augustus, art, war, administration, manufactures,—all were personified in strongly marked individualities ; all were imprinted with the stamp of active reason, brilliant and solid intellect, and determined will. Royalty, in its apogee, towered above all this splendor, to which the nobility brought great captains for its quota, and the bourgeoisie great writers and great administrators. The Gallican church also placed at the service of royalty the rarest gifts of genius. All Europe followed in the train of France, and modelled itself after her image. For the second time, France offered to history a complete society. The thirteenth century had been an adolescent society : the seventeenth century was a mature society. The change in the language expressed this difference. The French of the Renaissance, complete in the seventeenth century, as the Roman-French had been in the thirteenth century, was less sweet and stronger : precision and metaphysical lucidity replaced simplicity therein.

Sources of decay secretly undermined this greatness. The constitution of the Three Estates had perished as a political constitution : it was no longer any thing but a civil régime, a classification of the citizens into bodies separated by different privileges and laws. All political power was concentrated in the King. The consequences of absolute monarchy were not long in unfolding themselves. Abroad, the moderating action of France

threatened to become tyranny, and caused the reaction of Europe against the tendencies to universal monarchy, the revival of which it thought that it discerned in the very nation which had founded the European balance of power. Within, the principle of unity was carried to extremes. The local liberties, which had formerly sustained the vitality in the different parts of the nation, were stifled in behalf, not of national liberty, but of despotism. Lastly, by a false and fatal logic, a religious unity was deduced from political unity, the thoughts from the acts of man. Descartes had not touched upon religious dogmas in his metaphysical revolution. The old spirit of religious persecution revived in the midst of an era of reason and immense intellectual development. Almost a whole generation was drawn into this insensate contradiction by the love of uniformity; a monstrous exaggeration of the *collective* spirit of Gaul. Liberty of conscience was abolished. Men retrograded a century. Under the pretext of unity, society was rent asunder, and France was mutilated.

The punishment came. Enfeebled France was three times forced to stand the shock of formidable coalitions, which exhausted her resources and genius. Reverses succeeded the long series of her victories. She saved her territory only by desperate efforts, and emerged diminished from her struggle against Europe. The decline of the monarchy, of the Gallican church, and of the monarchical nobility which had replaced the ancient feudal nobility, had commenced. This decline advanced with terrible rapidity. An effort had been made to enforce external unity in religion: the result had been hypocrisy. Hypocrisy was succeeded by shamelessness: materialism threw off the mask. The springs of power had been stretched to arbitrariness: these springs had become strained. The invincible royalty of the seventeenth century was nothing more in the eighteenth century than a cavilling and impotent despotism, which had no longer the strength to be tyranny. France was delivered over to a government of intriguers and abandoned women, which called to mind the reign of the eunuchs at Byzantium and among the kings of the East. Diplomacy was rendered void like all else. Impolitic and ill-conducted wars ended in ignominy. A great colonial empire was lost. Poland was left to perish. The body politic and the body social became disjointed amidst sterile agitation. The court of Versailles repeated the last days of those antique empires of Asia which expired amidst the delirium of orgies. "*After us the deluge!*" This saying of the King was repeated with a common

voice by the nobility, by the higher clergy, by the financiers, by all the upper classes of society.

The *deluge* was approaching indeed: smothered murmurs were descending from the heavens, and rising from the depths of the earth; and the distant rumbling of the winds that sweep away empires was beginning to be heard. The philosophy of the eighteenth century was born.

After the practical materialism of the Regency came sensualistic philosophy; the offspring, and not the parent, of the moral decomposition; the negation of the whole past, under all its aspects, good or bad. The critical spirit of our race, and also its practical sense and profound humanity, were personified with unheard-of power in Voltaire. Cartesian philosophy, so great and so national, was incomplete. On the one hand, it had not touched directly on either politics or religion, although its method was applicable to them as to all else; on the other, this method had not given a place, by the side of Reason, to that other principle of certainty, Sentiment, without which Reason is so quickly arrested. By this breach entered the philosophy of sensation,—the English school of Locke. The innovators who attacked the beliefs and institutions of the past did so with the weapons of Locke, instead of the surer weapons of Descartes, and made sovereign Reason the handmaid of Sensation. The Christian Deism of Locke, become Epicurean Deism in Voltaire, ended in pure scepticism or naturalistic Pantheism in the Encyclopedic sect. By a logic which drew on this school, despite itself, selfishness was the final conclusion in ethics, and a materialistic and negative democracy in politics.

A new athlete appeared, bearing on his brow, furrowed by passions and sufferings, that mark of divine things which had hitherto been lacking to his age. Through Rousseau, Sentiment, restored to Philosophy, brought back thither the primordial truths, God and the immortality of the soul. In politics, Rousseau, the apostle of the sovereignty of the people, reestablished the democratic ideal upon the bases of spiritualistic morality and the duties of the citizen, without disregarding, but without sufficiently insuring, the reservation of human individuality in the presence of society. Unhappily, carried away by the stationary ideal of the antique republics, and by the reaction against the refinements of a corrupt civilization, he denied perfectibility, affirmed even by those who were prevented by their materialism from establishing the doctrine thereof upon its true foundations. These philosophers allied an inconceivable enthusiasm and aspiration to the opinions least

fitted to sustain the soul. They were much better than their doctrines. From amidst their errors was evolved an immense movement of humanity, justice, practical reason, scientific spirit, and improvements of all kinds. Impious in words, they were in some sort religious in heart and action,—a strange contrast to the epochs when the mind confesses truth, while the lifeless heart does not practise goodness. The men of the eighteenth century believed in nothing, for the most part, beyond this world; but they filled the world with so many hopes, that it seemed to them to suffice for the human race. Rousseau did not share their illusions. The germs of a new world existed, indeed, in this chaos; but with how much blood and how many tears were they to be watered, and during how many generations, before blossoming in the unknown domain which was to be revealed by the future!

A great attempt was made peacefully to transform the ancient régime. A fraction of the philosophers, who sought to found the theory of *wealth* and *progress*, and all social and political economy, upon the principle of property, arrived at power. They entered upon a reformation designed to end in a king, at the head of a body politic of landed proprietors, in which the three orders were to be absorbed. Royalty dared not test to the end this last chance of safety. At the same time that it clung to the old abuses, impelled by public opinion, it aided, despite itself, in the birth of a new republican world beyond the seas. After this distant diversion, it found itself again in collision with aggravated perils at home. The ruin of the finances was consummated. It was impossible longer to maintain the hierarchy of privileges and abuses. Royalty, at the last extremity, with a faltering hand attacked the institutions of inequality. The privileged orders replied by assaults upon absolutism. The ancient régime rent itself asunder with its own hands. Driven from one position to another, agitated and bewildered, royalty suffered an appeal to the nation to be wrung from it. The States-General were convoked after an interval of a hundred and seventy-five years. The three orders were face to face. The Third Estate summoned the other two orders to unite with it. Upon their refusal, it declared itself the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY; that is, the NATION by itself alone.

ANCIENT FRANCE, as we have said,—ancient France was ended.

The two privileged orders had no longer any reason for existing. The scientific and moral leadership had escaped from the

clergy, and fallen into the hands of secular thinkers and scholars.¹ The warrior-caste, endangered in the very foundation of its existence by the establishment of a standing army, had become useless to the national defence. The Third Estate had within itself all the elements of a complete society. As to royalty, it had been only the symbol of unity: now the living unity set itself up, and claimed at once the principle and the exercise of its sovereignty.

A moment subjugated by that celestial inspiration which swept over France, the representatives of the privileged orders, on the night of August 4, responded to the appeal of the representatives of the people by burning upon the altar of unity the title-deeds of a reign of ten centuries, — a night whose sacred darkness brought forth inspirations unexampled in history, impulses which the sympathetic genius of France could alone give as a spectacle to the universe! At the moment of being swallowed up in unity, the privileged orders rose, by a last effort, to the height of their antique virtue, and ennobled their end by rendering it voluntary. Human weakness, passions, the return of selfish regrets, will have in vain disowned this immortal night: history will record an impulse sublime even in those who knew not how to sustain their aspiration.

The abolition of hereditary and privileged nobility, together with primogenitureship and entails; the establishment of the equal division of property in the family; the suppression of feudal rights; and all the institutions pertaining thereto; the establishment of the civil status apart from the clergy; the abolition of canonical law, and the civil sanction of religious vows; the suppression of the ecclesiastical order as a body politic, and the sale of its immense estates at retail in order to generalize landed property; the destruction and annihilation of all privileges of corporations, families, and offices; all provincial, municipal, judicial, and fiscal diversities; all appropriation of social functions; all differences of origin among property; and all conditions restricting the freedom to labor and to acquire, — such were the immediate and definitive results of June 17 and August 4, 1789; results to which were speedily added, in the moral domain, the liberty of conscience and of worship, a principle of law, and no longer a simple compromise between armed sects, as the Edict of Nantes had been; and, in the material domain, with a new division of territory which swept away all traces of the feudal or absolute mon-

¹ Would it not have been thus, had there been no motive for the clergy to continue to form a political body ruled by separate laws?

archy, that unity of weights and measures which is the economic unity of France, and an example offered to the world of the application of lofty scientific methods to the regulation of the usages of life.

The levelling influence of the Revolution was felt everywhere. Nothing remained standing but the nation on one side, and the individual on the other.¹ The vast edifice of the social hierarchy crumbled in fewer days than it had taken centuries to build it. France was about to set to work upon a new form and organism. The more we meditate upon the meaning of that event which the universe has so well styled the REVOLUTION,—as if all the other revolutions of the globe and of humanity were effaced before this one,—the more we are impressed with its immensity. There is nothing comparable to it in the history of the human race. The majority of the systems of society had hitherto been seen to perish, either by a violent death or by languor, when their organism was dissolved: a few had been seen gradually to transform their organs; but never had the world beheld a nation undertaking to reconstitute itself *à priori* in the name of absolute right and pure reason, and, so to speak, the soul of a great people throwing off a worn-out chrysalis, and setting to work to reconstruct a new body! The Revolution repeated in the social order the work accomplished by Descartes in philosophy; and, extricating itself from the sophisms of infidelity, by that cry which men assembled never fail to raise to heaven, it dedicated its enterprise to the Supreme Being.²

What had been dimly discerned in an heroic burst of enthusiasm, it was necessary to attain by patient strength. The Revolution had sought to suppress time and tradition. It was necessary to resume the one, and to submit to the conditions of the other. The sovereignty of the people was reconquered; that is, the inalienable right of society to modify itself at its pleasure, without being chained to any forms or any persons. The principle was reconquered; but the question was, to know what to do with this principle: the idea was nothing, if not vivified by the spirit.

What was modern France to do? Instead of a society, which, with its royalty and its three orders, was complete only by disrupting the man, France was to constitute the *complete man in*

¹ And the commune, it may be added, the primitive and indestructible group.

² Constitution of 1791. — *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen.*

complete society.¹ For more than sixty years, France has been seeking this promised land.

In the civil domain, great results have been definitively acquired; in the political and moral domain, conquests not less brilliant have been many times made, and again lost; we have passed through gigantic alternations of progress and reaction; prodigious flights have been followed by long and profound exhaustion. The eighteenth century gave an impulse of immense boldness; but it did not leave moral resources sufficient to sustain this impulse to the end: and the nineteenth century has not yet succeeded in worthily continuing its predecessor while rectifying and completing it. Unhappy influences have disturbed the inheritance of the Revolution. False prophets have misled minds. Aspirations at times generous, but bewildered, cosmopolitan and pantheistic theories, have shaken free individuality and patriotism. Our generation has found itself disputed between the phantoms of the past and the visions of a future contrary to the genius of France. Seized with torpor after these violent struggles, it seems to abandon itself: it suffers itself passively to be carried away by the reflex of retrogressive doctrines,—one kind of powerlessness led captive by another; and regains its energy, only for the worship of material interests enveloped in a sort of practical fatalism.

Let us beware! Peoples are fallible and responsible like individuals. There is no fatality, no *unconquerable force of circumstances*, by which destinies are accomplished of themselves. These are the morbid visions of days of decay, wherein souls, the real beings, abdicating their functions, dream of some indescribable fantastic machine which replaces by its mechanism free and voluntary activity. There are only two *forces* in the moral world,—the will of Providence, and the will of man. Providence is unceasingly doing its work among us: man is no longer doing his.² Providence has been making appeal after appeal to France during the last sixty years. France commenced well; but does she continue to respond? What Providence asks of us is not the abdication of ourselves, is not puerile imitations of the past, senile reminiscences of the Middle Ages, but virile acts; the awakening

¹ This beautiful formula belongs to M. Pierre Leroux, whom, unhappily, it has not preserved from systems in which man could not be *complete*, since free individuality is not insured therein.

² Written in 1854. Since this time, France has begun again to be found on glorious battle-fields; but she must recover her spirit as well as her sword.

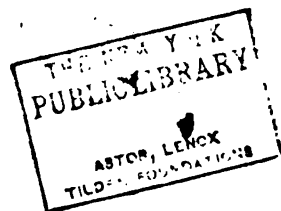
of the spirit of life and liberty, the awakening of right and duty, of devotion to truth and justice; faith by works; a religious renovation, proceeding from the eternal truths which the human mind has received from God, and not from human combinations worn out and swept away by the course of ages; a social development which seeks equality and justice through fraternity, without thinking of changing the natural and necessary bases of societies, or of inventing a man other than that whom God has made. Let us beware! Providence may weary: there are no infallible destinies. No one is necessary to God. The Master may transfer to others the inheritance neglected by the unfaithful servant. Let France look at Spain and Italy, buried for three centuries in a sepulchre from which such efforts are now being made to roll away the stone!

Race of the Gauls, innovating race whose roots strike so deep into the past, sound thy heart, and recognize thyself! Do not look outside thyself: long since hast thou ceased to be under the traditions of the Germans. The cycle of Roman education, in turn, has ended for thee; the genius of worn-out Rome has nothing more to teach thee: it would stifle thee beneath its despotic discipline, which purchases material progress and a superficial unity at the cost of moral life and human dignity. Interrogate thy own genius, transformed by the Christian Word. Thou who hast formerly developed in the world the sentiment and the doctrine of immortality,—it suffices for thee to see thy image reflected in its source, to cast from thee the polluted winding-sheet in which thou hast been enveloped by materialism. Seize anew that *primordial inspiration*, that *memory of thine own*, that *indestructible individuality*, which God, according to a profound interpretation of thy antique recollections, has given to every being on creating him. Repeat the saying of the sage, — **KNOW THYSELF!** — and thou wilt be saved.

FINIS.



Discite Iustitiam moniti...



APPENDIX.

FOR the valuable notes which compose this Appendix, and form so interesting an addition to the American portion of this work, we are indebted to the kindness of Henry B. Dawson, Esq., of Morrisania, N.Y., member of the Historical Societies of New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Wisconsin, and of the New-England Historic-Genealogical Society; the well-known author of "Battles of the United States by Sea and Land," "Sons of Liberty in New York," "Assault on Stony Point," etc., and editor of the "Fœderalist." These notes have been made with the entire approbation of M. Martin, who is anxious that his work should be complete upon a ground whereon a foreign writer, whose access to the fullest sources of information would necessarily be in some degree limited, might easily be mistaken as to details. We would also acknowledge with gratitude the kind assistance of Mr. Dawson in the preparation of all the portion of the translation relating to the American Revolution. — TR.

I.

Page 365, lines 26-28: "*From that time, it could be seen that there was a chasm between Old England and this infant nationality, — between a society of fact and tradition, and a society of right and reason.*"

The American Revolution can be traced back to a much earlier date than 1764; and the passage of the Stamp Act, the first cause for *general* complaint, served rather to consolidate a series of elements which were antagonistic to the government, than to originate a new one where it had been before unknown.

From the earliest days of the English colonies in New England, the colonists assumed to be, politically, what was denied by the Home Government. Two distinct nationalities — one a conqueror, the other a conquered people, and therefore antagonistic — peopled New York and portions of New Jersey; and, in the other colonies, other causes, often temporary and local in their character, served to irritate, and produce an opposition among those who were impatient of governmental control and ministerial interference.

In New York, so determined was the opposition of the Dutch as early as 1664, that the government was obliged to abandon some of its measures (*Minutes of Common Council of New York*, Oct. 14 and 20, 1664); and, from that time until the opening of the war in 1775, New York led the republican elements of the continent in their opposition to the old systems of government and to the usurpations of authority by the servants of the King in America (*Sons of Liberty in New York*, a paper read before the New-York Historical Society, May 3, 1859).

It is proper to observe, however, that while the governments in the several colonies, from an early date, had been constantly engaged in as many series of

local struggles with the colonists in America, there had been no *general* grievance, and consequently no *general*, united, or concerted opposition, among the latter, until the passage of the Stamp Act in March, 1765.

That indiscreet measure fell among the colonists in every part of America with equal violation of their rights; and while those of them who possessed royal charters appealed to those instruments, and demanded a recognition of their "chartered rights," New York — a conquered, and therefore an unchartered province — joined her sister colonies in the joint demand for their rights, under the plea that the "rights of man" had been invaded by the act in question.

While it may be proper, therefore, to consider the Stamp Act as the signal for a *concerted* and *united* opposition to the government, it is not proper to refer to it as the origin of the American Revolution, since that great work had been in progress in each of the colonies almost from the beginning of their existence; and a concentration of its power had been prevented only by the policy of the government in giving no general cause for complaint until the adoption of this measure.

II.

Page 365, lines 33-36: "*The Presbyterians, animated by democratic sentiments, had taken advantage of the prevailing agitation to organize themselves into a general association, which they had always been prevented from doing: this religious association became a vigorous political instrument.*"

It is evident, that, in the construction of these lines, the author was controlled by the royalist writers of that period, by whom, very often, all who opposed the government, whether they were republicans or monarchists in sentiment, were indiscriminately styled "Presbyterians," notwithstanding the great body of those in New England who thus resisted the ministry were "Congregationalists" and "Baptists;" those in New York were principally "Reformed Dutch" and "Baptists," with a few "Presbyterians;" those in Pennsylvania were generally "German Reformed;" those in Maryland were almost exclusively "Roman Catholics" and "Episcopalians;" and those in Virginia and the Carolinas were principally of the latter denomination and "Baptists."

It is noteworthy in this connection also, that while the meeting-houses of the Reformed Dutch, Baptist, and some other dissenting churches, in the city of New York, were taken by the enemy, and used for public purposes, during the military occupation of that city, those belonging to the Church of England and to the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches were retained by their respective owners, and continued to be used for their legitimate purposes.

The association to which reference is made in the text was probably that known as "The Sons of Liberty," — a body which was purely *political* in its character, embracing members of nearly every religious sect and of varied political opinions. It was organized soon after the trial of Zenger in 1745 (*Lieut.-Gov. Colden to the Earl of Halifax*, 22d February, 1765); and, from that time until the breaking-out of the war in 1775, it wielded a great political influence throughout the continent. Indeed, its members were among the leaders of the colonists, both in the Revolution and in the war which succeeded it; and at a later period, in some of the States, the influence of the ancient association was felt, when, in 1787-8, the *Constitution for the United States* was offered to the several States for their approval and ratification.

III.

Page 366, lines 12-14: "*The shoots from the tree of Boston soon covered British America, and were destined later to cross the ocean.*"

It is not the purpose of this note to dispute with Boston the honor which has been awarded to that city by the distinguished author of this work: it is rather to speak in behalf of "the truth of history" concerning the leadership in the Revolution which separated thirteen peoples from their common sovereign and their common country.

It was not the policy of Massachusetts at any time to defend, except incidentally, the constitutional rights of any people but her own; nor did she ever base her opposition to the Crown on any thing but her own charter. Even in her opposition to the Stamp Act, her great leader admitted the "supremacy of Parliament" (Otis's *Rights of the British Colonies asserted and proved*, 8d Ed. pp. 49, 57; Otis's *Vindication of the British Colonies*, Ed. Boston, 1765, p. 21); in all of which she was fully sustained by Rhode Island and Connecticut.

New York, on the contrary, by the leader of her Sons of Liberty, declared for a separation from the mother-country (*Letter in New-York Gazette and Post-Boy*, No. 1157, March 7, 1765, etc.); and her Assembly, on the 18th of October, 1764, approved, and despatched to London, a memorial to the House of Commons, in which it demanded "an Exemption from the Burthen of ungranted, involuntary Taxes," and proceeded "to inform the Commons of Great Britain, that the People of this Colony, inspired by the Genius of their Mother-Country, nobly disdain the thought of claiming that Exemption as a *Privilege*: They found it on a Basis more honorable, solid, and stable; they challenge it, and glory in it, as their Right" (*Journal of the General Assembly*, Oct. 18, 1764).

On the same day, — six years before Massachusetts attempted to follow her example, — her General Assembly appointed the first of those bodies which were known as "Committees of Correspondence" (*Ibid.*), and which were described by a contemporary writer as "the foulest, subtlest, and most venomous serpents that ever issued from the eggs of sedition."

Three months before (July 10, 1764), her people had successfully resisted the encroachments on her marine by the royal navy, and compelled the officers of one of his Majesty's ships-of-war to release four fishermen whom they had impressed in the harbor of New York (*New-York Gazette and Post-Boy*, July 12, 1764); and, when the passage of the Stamp Act indicated a settled purpose of enforcing the obnoxious measure, her merchants organized the first "Non-Importation Association," and appointed the second "Committee of Correspondence" (*New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, No. 1192, Nov. 7, 1765; *Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, Nov. 11, 1765; *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, Nov. 11, 1765): while her people compelled the royal Lieutenant-Governor to surrender, at the gates of the fort, the boxes containing the stamped paper (*Minutes of the Common Council of New York*, Nov. 5, 1765); and the press of Massachusetts, bearing testimony to the backwardness of that colony, appealed to the merchants of Boston to follow the example which she had presented (*Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, Nov. 25, 1765).

The integrity of her merchants, in their respect for the agreement to abstain from the introduction into the colony of British goods, was most distinguished (*Returns of Exports to America*, in *Sons of Liberty in New York*, p. 87); and, when it became necessary to interpose force (January 18, 1770), the blood

of her inhabitants was first shed in behalf of the "rights of man" and of America (*New-York Journal*, No. 1417, Thursday, March 1, 1770; *Letter from New York*, dated Jan. 22, 1770, published in *The St. James Chronicle*, No. 1412, London, March 15, 1770; *Boston Chronicle*, Nos. 168 and 169, Feb. 5 and 8, 1770; *Letter in the Massachusetts Gazette*, Thursday, Feb. 1, 1770; *Lieut.-Gov. Colden's Despatch to the Home Government*, No. 9, New York, Feb. 21, 1770; *Gordon's American Revolution*, I. p. 300; *Bancroft's United States*, VI. p. 332).

At a subsequent date, when the tax on tea aroused the colonists to renewed opposition, the Sons of Liberty in New York were among the foremost in their opposition to the measure (Leake's *Life of Lamb*, 79, 80; *Reminiscences of the Park and its Vicinity*, Ed. 1855, pp. 28-32; *Gordon's American Revolution*, I. pp. 332-334); and, when the tea-ship arrived off the city of New York, she was not permitted to enter the harbor, and sought safety by returning to London.

About the same time, a ship came up to the city with eighteen chests of tea secreted in her hold, of which the Sons of Liberty had received notice from London; when the people, undisguised, and in open day, took possession of her, removed her cargo, seized the tea, emptied it into the harbor, and sent the captain of the ship to London, without his vessel, on board the tea-ship *Nancy*, which just then returned, as has been already stated (*Gaines's New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury*, No. 1174, Monday, April 25, 1774; *Holt's New-York Journal*, Nos. 1633 and 1634, Thursday, April 21 and 28, 1774; *Gordon's American Revolution*, I. pp. 333, 334; *Bancroft's United States*, VI. p. 525; *Reminiscences of the Park and its Vicinity*, Ed. 1855, pp. 28-32).

IV.

Page 366, lines 26-29: "Associations were formed everywhere, the members of which pledged themselves to refuse all British products, at the price of whatever privation, until reparation was granted the colonies."

The earliest of these associations, of which we have any knowledge, was that which was formed by "the Merchants of the city of New York, trading to Great Britain," at a meeting which was held at Burns's Coffee-house on the evening of the 31st of October, 1765; and the "Retailers of Goods" in the same city entered into a similar agreement on the same day (*Holt's New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, No. 1192, Thursday, Nov. 7, 1765; *Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, Monday, Nov. 11, 1765; *Edes and Gill's Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, Nov. 11, 1765; *London Chronicle*, No. 1401, Dec. 12, 1765; *Bancroft's United States*, V. pp. 351, 352). A similar association was formed by "the Merchants and Traders" of Philadelphia on the seventh of November following (*Letter from Philadelphia*, dated Nov. 7, 1765, in *The London Chronicle*, No. 1407, Dec. 26, 1765; *Holt's New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, No. 1194, Thursday, Nov. 21, 1765); and after considerable delay, and not without an urgent appeal to their pride (*Communication in The Boston Gazette*, Nov. 25, 1765), the merchants of Boston followed their example, on the ninth of December (*Holt's New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, Extra, No. 1195, Dec. 27, 1765).

The movement soon became general; but it was very short-lived: and there are reasonable doubts concerning the fidelity with which the pledge was adhered to,—the imports of New England having been reduced only £8,465. 6s. 4d. in 1765, and £31,884. 1s. in 1766; while those of New York, the most faithful of the thirteen colonies, were reduced only £133,067. 1s. in 1765,

and £49,431. 4s. in 1766; while the Carolinas and Georgia largely increased their imports in 1765; and Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia, those of 1766 (*Sons of Liberty in New York*, p. 87, note).

V.

Page 366, lines 31-34: "*They did more; they prevented the landing and distribution of the stamped paper; and, the administration of civil justice and commerce being thus suspended in point of fact, the Assembly of Massachusetts boldly see itself up in opposition to the English Parliament, and authorized the citizens to dispense with the stamp in business transactions.*"

In this sentence, more than one subject has been referred to, which needs notice.

While it may be true, that, in some of the colonies, the stamps were not landed from the vessels which had brought them to America, it is not so in all cases.

Those which were sent to New York, for instance, were landed without opposition, and deposited in the fort; but they were not distributed, nor were they allowed to leave the fort, except in the manner in which the Sons of Liberty approved, and to the persons in whose integrity they had entire confidence, after the issue of a call for the inhabitants to meet, *armed*, for the purpose of seizing them. They were surrendered at the gate of the fort, by the King's Lieutenant-Governor and by the General-in-Chief of the King's forces in America, to the corporation of the city of New York, by whom they were receipted for, and finally disposed of (*Lieut.-Gov. Colden to Secretary Conway*, Nov. 5, 1765; *Reminiscences of the Park and its Vicinity*, Ed. 1855, pp. 11, 12; *Lieut.-Gov. Colden to the Lords of Trade*, Dec. 6, 1765; *MS. Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York*, Nov. 5, 1765).

The General Court, or Colonial Assembly, of Massachusetts, authorized the residents of *that colony* only, "to dispense with the stamp in business transactions." That body possessed no authority whatever beyond the boundaries of that colony; and no other person than a resident of that colony pretended to recognize its authority, or obeyed its orders. The several colonies were entirely independent bodies; and at the period referred to, in the language of Mr. Bancroft, "the eye of the whole continent watched with the intensest anxiety the conduct of New York, the capital of the central province, and headquarters of the standing forces in America" (*History*, Ed. 1852, V. p. 331; see also *Gov. Bernard to the Lords of Trade*, July 7, 1766).

In the consideration of all questions concerning the history of the United States, particularly concerning their political history, there is no subject which possesses more importance than the entirely distinct and separate organization and government of the several colonies, and their entirely separate and very often diverse action on the great questions of the day. Each colony was separate and distinct from all the others in every respect; and, in its subordination to the King and the Parliament, each was accountable directly, and not through any other. This peculiar condition of the colonies was continued until nearly the close of the War of the Revolution; and not until the 1st of March, 1781, was there any bond of union between them, except the bond of common danger from a common foe, and that of a common desire to gain a common security. *The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union*, which took effect on that

day, secured, for the first time, the *legal* union of the States; and thenceforth the thirteen were *confederated* States.

VI.

Page 367, lines 6, 7: "*The Assembly of New York refused. It was suspended by act of Parliament until it should have obeyed.*"

Referring to the "Act for restraining and prohibiting the Governor, Council, and House of Representatives, of the Province of New York, until provision shall have been made for furnishing the King's troops with all the necessaries required by law, from passing or assenting to any Act of Assembly, Vote, or Resolution, for any other purpose;" passed in the Parliament in the spring of 1767.

VII.

Page 368, lines 5-7: "*The first blood shed at Boston, March 5, 1770, in an affray between the soldiers and the people, seemed to gush forth afresh throughout America.*"

Like many other features of the Revolutionary struggle, "the first blood shed" has been unwarrantably distorted by many of our writers and book-makers, evidently for the promotion of the extraordinary but systematic pretensions of Massachusetts to priority in the cause of the Republic, and to superior importance in the family of States. While this evil spirit of rivalry between the several States should be condemned as pernicious, if not positively destructive of the best interests of the Union, it is proper, in view of its mischievous effects abroad, as seen in the pages of this work, to oppose it with the truth, simple and unadorned, but not unsustained, and to leave the result of that exposition to the candor and good sense of the reader.

On the 13th, 15th, and 16th of January, 1770, the soldiery composing the garrison in the city of New York made desperate attempts to destroy the Liberty-pole which the Sons of Liberty had erected on the Common, now the Park, in that city; and, at a very early hour on the latter day, they succeeded not only in prostrating it, but in sawing it into pieces, and piling it in front of Montanye's Tavern, the headquarters of the Sons of Liberty (Holt's *New-York Journal*, No. 1411, Jan. 18, 1770; Gordon's *American Revolution*, I. p. 436; Dunlap's *History of New York*, I. p. 300).

On the following day (January 17), pursuant to a public call, the inhabitants, to the number of three thousand persons, assembled around the stump of the prostrated Liberty-pole; and measures were adopted to erect another pole, to compel the soldiers to remain within their barracks after evening roll-call, and to prevent the employment of them by the inhabitants in menial services (Holt's *New-York Journal*, No. 1412, Jan. 25, 1770; Dunlap's *History of New York*, I. pp. 436, 437; Bancroft's *History*, Ed. 1854, pp. 331, 332).

On the 19th, scurrilous hand-bills, signed "*Sixteenth Regiment*," were posted about the city; and three soldiers, who were engaged in that service near the Fly Market, were seized by Isaac Sears and Walter Quackenbos, members of the Sons of Liberty; and, after a sharp contest, two of them were carried to the Mayor's office.

An attempt was made, by some of the associates of the prisoners, to rescue them; but Captain Richardson and the citizens kept them at bay until a re-

enforcement of twenty men from the lower barracks, at the fort, came to the assistance of the assailants. These drew their bayonets and swords, while the citizens seized the stakes and "rungs" from the carts and sleighs which were in the vicinity; and each party sullenly prepared for the contest, and each seems to have sent messengers to its friends for additional forces.

At this moment the Mayor and Alderman Desbrosses appeared, and ordered the soldiers to return to their barracks; when they reluctantly retired. When they had reached Golden Hill (now John Street, between Cliff Street and Burling Slip), they met the reinforcement for which they had sent; and, under the control of one who is supposed from his dress to have been an officer in disguise, the united forces turned, and made a furious attack on the magistrates and a large body of burghers by whom they were followed. A desperate fight ensued; and not until the superior officers of the garrison came on the ground, and ordered the soldiers to retire, was the "battle" closed.

In this affray, known to the present generation as "THE BATTLE OF GOLDEN HILL," both the soldiery and burghers suffered severely. Among the latter, Francis Field, a Friend, was wounded in the cheek while standing at his own door; several others were severely wounded; one was killed with a bayonet; and a sailor was cut down: the former were very severely handled, many of them were disarmed, and all were badly beaten.

On the following day (January 20), the contest was renewed, at the head of Beekman Street, between a party of soldiers and one of sailors; and, when the Mayor appeared, his orders were entirely disregarded. The populace hastened to the assistance of the sailors; but the soldiery retired to their barracks when they saw the determined spirit with which they were opposed.

In the afternoon of the same day, a number of burghers who were assembled on the Common, opposite the new Jail,—immediately eastward from the present City Hall,—were attacked by another party of soldiers; but the latter were so severely handled, that they never ventured to renew the contest.

The most intense excitement prevailed throughout the city; and the despatches of the colonial authorities to the Home Government, the newspaper-press of that period both in Europe and America, the standard historical authorities of the earlier days of the Republic, to say nothing of the more recent historical writers who have made the local history of New York a specialty, bear ample testimony to the importance of the event, and present the silence concerning it, of those American writers who assume to write on the history of their country, for the judgment of all just men.

Those who are curious to inquire concerning this subject are referred to *Lieut.-Gov. Colden's Despatch to the Earl of Hillsborough*, No. 9, 21st February, 1770,—Colden MSS., New-York Historical Society's Library; the volume of "Broad-sides" in the same collection; *Holt's New-York Journal*, No. 1437, Thursday, March 1, 1770; *The Boston Chronicle*, Nos. 168 and 169, Feb. 5 and 8, 1770; *Letter*, dated "New York, Jan. 22, 1770," published in *The St. James Chronicle, or British Evening Post*, No. 1412, London, March 15, 1770; *Gordon's History of American Revolution*, I. p. 300; *Dunlap's History of New York*, I. p. 437; *Bancroft's United States*, Ed. 1854, VI. p. 332; *Reminiscences of the Park and its Vicinity*, pp. 60–62; *Leake's Life of Lamb*, pp. 55–58; *Dawson's Sons of Liberty*, Ed. 1859, pp. 112–117; *Booth's History of New York*, pp. 448–453, etc.

VIII.

Page 368, lines 21-24: "*The Massachusetts Assembly explicitly denied to the two houses the right of making laws for the colonies. It was the first time that the supremacy of the Parliament had been rejected in express and general terms. The legal resistance tended to become revolution (1772).*"

In 1744, when Lieutenant-Governor Clarke of New York proposed to tax the colonies by means of stamped paper, the royal governor Clinton, of the same colony, informed the ministry that "the People in North America are quite strangers to any duty but such as they raise themselves; and, was such a scheme to take place without their knowledge, it might prove a dangerous consequence to His Majesty's interest" (Gov. Clinton to Duke of Newcastle, New York, 13th December, 1744).

"The General Assembly of this Colony have no desire to derogate from the Power of the Parliament of Great Britain: but they cannot avoid deprecating the Loss of such Rights as they have hitherto enjoyed; Rights established in the first Dawn of our Constitution, founded upon the most substantial Reasons, confirmed by invariable Usage, conducive to the best Ends; never abused to bad Purposes, and with the Loss of which, Liberty, Property, and all the Benefits of Life, tumble into Insecurity and Ruin: Rights, the Deprivation of which will dispirit the People, abate their Industry, discourage Trade, introduce Discord, Poverty, and Slavery; or, by depopulating the Colonies, turn a vast, fertile, prosperous Region into a dreary Wilderness; impoverish Great Britain; and shake the Power and Independency of the most opulent and flourishing Empire in the World" (*Memorial of the Assembly of New York to the House of Commons*, Oct. 18, 1764, — *Journal of the Assembly* of that date).

"The great fundamental principles of government should be common to all its parts and members, else the whole will be endangered. If, then, the interests of the mother-country and her colonies cannot be made to coincide; if the same constitution may not take place in both; if the welfare of the mother-country necessarily requires a sacrifice of the most natural rights of the colonies, — THEIR RIGHT OF MAKING THEIR OWN LAWS, AND DISPOSING OF THEIR OWN PROPERTY BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING, — if such is really the case between Great Britain and her colonies, then the connection between them OUGHT TO CEASE; and sooner or later it must inevitably cease. The English government cannot long act towards a part of its dominions upon principles diametrically opposed to its own, without losing itself in the slavery it would impose upon the colonies, or leaving them to throw it off, and assert their own freedom (*Essays*, signed "FREEMAN," in the *New-York Journal*, June, 1765).

Contrast these sentiments with what appears to have been the conclusions of the learned author respecting the priority of the claim of colonial independence of the Parliament of Great Britain.

IX.

Page 378, Note 3: This note is calculated to mislead the reader concerning the *Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union* which were reported in secret session to the Congress, not published, on the 20th of August, 1776, and agreed to by that body on the 15th of November, 1777; but they were not approved by the several States, and therefore they remained inoperative, until

the 1st of March, 1781 (*Secret Journals of the Congress*, vol. "History of the Confederation").

Until the latter date, the States were not even confederated; nor was there any such body, in law, as "The United States of America." Hence the variety of names which was applied to the aggregate body,— "the Thirteen united States," "the United States of North America," etc.

X.

Page 379, lines 12-14: "*Despite their courage and the military talents of their leader, the American militia succumbed before the discipline of the Anglo-Germans.*"

The "leader" referred to is assumed to have been General Washington; but the discipline of the enemy had less to do with the disaster at Brooklyn than the ignorant, self-conceited inefficiency of General Israel Putnam, who held the immediate command of that post.

The limits assigned to these notes will not permit an extended examination of this subject; and the reader is referred to Dawson's *Battles of the United States*, First Edition, I. pp. 148-150, and to the authorities which are referred to therein, for further particulars concerning it.

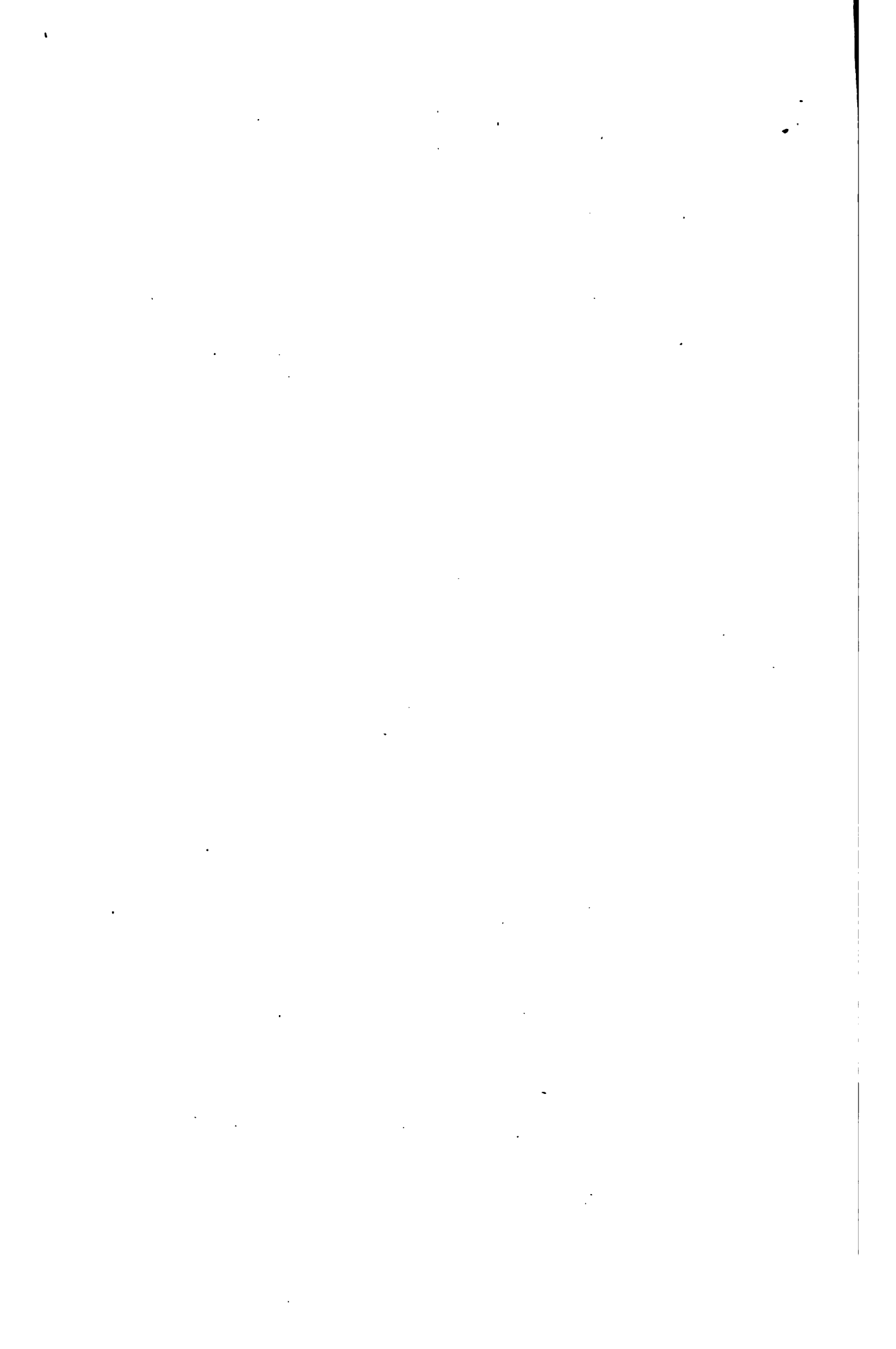
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